The Great Awakening

F. L. Chapell

Central BAPTIST
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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KANSAS CITY, KANSAS

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May 19, 1923.

THE

Great Awakening

of 1740

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By Rev. F. L. CHAPELL

Lectures delivered before the Baptist Church of Evanston, Ill., the Second Baptist Church of Chicago, and other churches; published by request in "The Standard," and used for the Gordon Missionary Training School, Boston.

Revivals. U.S. 1735-1742.
Revivals. History. U.S.

PHILADELPHIA
American Baptist Publication Society
1903

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PUBLICATION SOCIETY

Published December, 1903

From the Society's own Press

2692
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I

The Great Awakening of 1740—Introductory

THE chief religious fact of the eighteenth century, the great revival of spiritual religion, is usually termed the Great Awakening of 1740, because its chief intensity, in this country, culminated about that time. But it was by no means confined to that year. It commenced more than a decade before that date and continued with power more than a decade after it. Yea, more; it is continuing yet, for the revivals with which we are repeatedly visited, are but the echoes and reverberations of that mighty blast of the gospel trumpet which then awoke a slumbering church and a slumbering world. Nor will these echoes cease till the mightier blast of Gabriel's more majestic trump shall announce the glories of the kingdom of God.

I. Let us, in the first place, step back one hundred and forty years or thereabout,

and take a little survey of the religious condition of the world in the first third of the eighteenth century. And I may as well say at the outset that it is a dark, sad picture that we shall look upon, for the eighteenth century, one of the most interesting epochs of all history, as a whole is a dark period. Dreary and dreadful epithets have been well-nigh exhausted in describing it. It has been called gloomy, melancholy, shameful, fearful, terrible, infernal, devilish. It has been termed the age of skepticism, the period of the eclipse of faith. It has been likened to the awful volcano, and to the terrible storm of the whirlwind or the hurricane. And it was all that it has been called. For I know not any other period of the world's history that shows such a general and terrible sway of essential devilishness as that which, during this century, commenced with a false philosophy in the cloisters of the savants and ended with the Reign of Terror in the streets of Paris. The enemy came in truly like a flood, but the Spirit of the Lord lifted up a standard against him.

But it is not my purpose to survey the whole battle ground, to canvass the conflict in continental Europe, and in the do-

mains of the Roman and Greek communions, but merely to show how the Lord came to the rescue of those who had the best claim to being his witnesses in the world, namely, the Protestant churches of Great Britain and America.

1. Let me begin by noting some of the *political and material facts of history* at this time. And the first thing that strikes us Americans is that this great republic of the Western world had not then come into being. There was in America only a line of colonies on the Atlantic seaboard, containing not more than two millions of inhabitants. New York, Boston, and Philadelphia were hardly more than overgrown villages. George II. was our king. Slavery existed in Massachusetts and Connecticut, as well as in Georgia and South Carolina, while numbers of Indians swarmed around the young and growing settlements. Yet the colonies were so far established as to have come into a secure and comfortable position, while the disaffection toward the mother country, that afterward produced the Revolution, had not then arisen.

Across the ocean the kingdom of Great Britain was in a high state of material prosperity. By a series of salutary events, af-

ter the dethronement of James the Second, throughout the reigns of William III., Queen Anne, and George I., she had come into a commanding position. The Protestant house of Brunswick was firmly established on the throne of the united kingdom under a constitutional monarchy. The victories of Marlborough had humbled her rivals, the founding of the Bank of England and the establishment of the East India Company, together with the tribute of the American Colonies, had greatly advanced her financial interests; and material prosperity had begun to produce its invariable fruits of profligacy, dishonesty, and rash speculation. The times were so good politically and materially that they were bad enough morally and religiously.

2. Another thing to be noticed was the *intellectual status of the times*. It is always the policy of Satan, where he cannot prevent a movement hostile to him, to mount it himself and, riding upon it, manage it in his own interests. And this was the method in which he was now treating the Protestant Reformation. When he found that he could not prevent free inquiry and the right of private judgment; when he discovered that he could not prevent the establishment

of a Protestant church, he determined that he would push free inquiry into the extremes of skepticism and unbelief, and that he would make the Protestant church as devoid of true spiritual life as the Romish had been.

This, it seems to me, is the explanation of the fearful skepticism of the eighteenth century. Over the intellectual world Satan breathed the benumbing chill of unbelief regarding things divine and supernatural. Three leading classes of minds especially fell under its influence, philosophers, statesmen, and historians; and these gave direction to the general drift of thought. Many of these stronger minds of this general period, such as Hobbes and Locke among philosophers, the Earl of Shaftesbury and Lord Bolingbroke among statesmen, Hume and Gibbon among historians, were his chosen apostles for the dissemination of infidel sentiments. Thus the foundations were destroyed. This reigning unbelief, together with the political and material prosperity already noticed, was fatal enough to true piety. Natural religion was almost the only one believed in at all, and this, as we well know, has but little strength or conserving power. As a consequence the public,

losing faith in God and the Bible, lost faith in and respect for restraining principles of any kind and a sort of lawlessness and viciousness began to be rife that alarmed the better class of reflecting minds.

3. It was then that *popular literature* commenced the work in which it has since so largely exerted itself; namely, of attempting to correct and teach morals. It was then that Steele's "Tatler" began to tell of the vices of society; then that Addison's "Spectator" began to hold them up to view; then that the "Guardian," also edited by Steele, sought to defend the public from its insinuating enemies, and soon after that Johnson's "Rambler" peregrinated for the same good cause. And these did produce some superficial improvement; but it was only superficial, as such work always will be unless it is based on the firmer foundation of revealed truth and solemn penalty. It is in vain to say this or that is shameful and disastrous, unless you can show, from eternal truth, why it is shameful and to what disaster it will lead.

II. But now, leaving the general view of the times, I wish to present more particularly the *state of the Protestant churches* at this period and the condition of religion

within them. And what were the denominations then in existence? Think a moment. There were no Methodists, and that is saying a great deal when you are taking an inventory of true religion. Again, there were very few Baptists, and that too is saying a great deal when you are searching in the same direction. The Baptists could, indeed, claim at this period a recognized denominational existence of a hundred years, both in Europe and America. There were now eight small Baptist churches in Rhode Island and a number of others scattered through the various colonies, with a respectable number in several European States. But nowhere did they have a legal right to exist except in Rhode Island. In England they were persecuted till the Act of Toleration in 1689, and in America they only obtained full legal rights after the Revolutionary War. They, therefore, did not form any very important, practical element in the religious status of this period, though their protesting voice was often heard.

The only Protestant denominations of prominence in Great Britain and America at this time were ~~Episcopalians~~ Anglican, Congregationalists, and Presbyterians, and these even were not as we find them now. They

have greatly changed, at least the last two, in two important particulars: first, in their relation to the State; and second, in their practical use of infant baptism. These three churches were at that time State Churches: the Episcopal, of England; the Congregational, of New England; and the Presbyterian, of Scotland. They were, moreover, tenacious of these political relations and regarded the Baptists as pestilent heretics because they pleaded for a separation of Church and State. Infant baptism too was by them universally practised, and the infants baptized were very generally regarded as Christians and as full members of the church. Practice on these latter points, however, was not uniform throughout these three churches, nor indeed in the same church at different times or in different places. Hence I must particularize a little in regard to each of them and state a little more fully what was involved in infant baptism and the union of Church and State.

1. *The Episcopal Church* was, perhaps, the best exemplification of these doctrines. She held that at baptism the child was regenerated and ingrafted into the church, and that such regeneration and church

standing was necessary to good civil standing. And as the partaking of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was an expression of church standing, so it was necessary to civil standing. The law required every one who was to hold a civil office to "qualify" himself by partaking of the sacrament. Hence, any clergyman who refused to give the sacrament to any applicant inflicted a civil injury and was liable to prosecution at law for the offense. Any one who had been baptized and had learned the creed and catechism and was not scandalous in life had a legal right to the sacrament. In all this there was not the least reference to the spiritual state of the heart. Any discrimination in favor of true religion by evangelical rectors only produced trouble for them. John Wesley, during his sojourn in Georgia, was prosecuted at law for refusing the sacrament to a person whom he judged to be unfit for its reception. Such a thing as intelligent conversion was not at all insisted upon in the Episcopal Church.

2. The condition of the *Congregational Church* of New England, though theoretically different, had come to be practically about the same. The original Puritans

who emigrated to this country for conscience' sake knew what true religion was, and they attempted to insist on this in their church order. The Cambridge platform, laid down in 1648, declared that none except such as might "in charitable discretion" be considered regenerate persons should be admitted to the communion. But the union of Church and State and the theory of infant baptism overthrew the laudable intention. By the law of the New England colonies no one could hold a civil office, or even vote at elections, unless he were a church-member. Hence, those who had been baptized in infancy would, of course, claim their church-membership in order to citizenship, and if church-members, surely they must have all church privileges. Thus, in course of time, the Congregationalists receded from the noble ground of the Cambridge platform and no longer required evidence of conversion or change of heart in order to full church-membership.

3. Among the *Presbyterians* the case was much the same. They have, indeed, ever theoretically held that saving faith was necessary in order to the partaking of the communion. Hence, their preparatory lec-

ture and the meeting of the session before the communion in order to examine the baptized in reference to their qualifications for partaking. But in Scotland the Presbyterian Church was established by law, and "all except the ignorant and the scandalous had a legal right" to the sacrament. Therefore, the sessions could not and did not insist on *evidences* of conversion, but sheltered themselves behind a curious theory of some of their theologians, to the effect that regeneration was such a subtle and mysterious operation that no one could judge from his feelings whether he was a subject of it or not. But it was taken for granted that all who had been baptized and were not scandalous in their lives *were* regenerated without regard to their emotions or affections. Hence, all respectable young people were usually admitted to full membership when they arrived at years of understanding. By this method a large share of the communicants of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland had no practical experience of spiritual religion. And the churches of this order in America were constructed, as far as possible, on the Scottish model.

Thus we find that at this time the three

leading denominations of Protestantism ignored vital piety in their church order. The voice of the few and scattered Baptists was raised from time to time in favor of a converted church-membership, but with little general effect since they had no legal or influential standing.

III. From this constitution and order of the churches several grave results followed.

1. The churches themselves were in a very low state of spiritual life and power, since a large portion of their members knew nothing of that heart experience which constitutes the essence of true religion. Scarcely any discipline could be enforced. No prayer meetings bearing any respectable proportion to the whole membership could be held. The church as a whole was not a spiritual body. There might be a few spiritual members, but what were they among so many? The forms of religion were observed, but the power was wanting.

2. Another result was that the ministry was fearfully deteriorated, being composed in many cases of those who made no pretension to personal piety, for there was nothing to hinder such taking the holy office. If a change of heart was not necessary for the membership, why was it for the

ministry? If religion consisted in the observance of the sacraments and a moral life, truly he who was faithful in these regards and was talented and well educated was a proper candidate for the ministry. Thus it came to pass that there were not only unconverted and unspiritual men in the ministry, but there were found leading and prominent divines to argue that such a state of things was perfectly proper, that it was not necessary to have an experimental knowledge of religion in order to preach it. This view seems strange to us now. To be sure, many of the incumbents of the livings in the Church of England are worldly men. It does not perhaps shock us to think of rectors and curates in the Establishment, who make no pretension to personal piety. But to think of this among Congregationalists and Presbyterians does seem decidedly incongruous; yet such was the sad fact before the Great Awakening of 1740, and may be again should spiritual life run low.

3. But the saddest result of all was the effect that this state of things had upon the general public. People heard scarcely anything in many cases from the pulpit that was at all searching, for a dead ministry

must, of course, preach dead sermons. But if the truth did sometimes fall upon the people, it had but little effect, when they remembered that they were already members of the church, and that they had fulfilled the requirements of the church. They considered that they were Christians already, in some sense, for they had been baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and they were remembering Christ in the holy sacrament according as they were commanded. They were doing all that they could, and what more was required of them ? And, as if to take off the point of any scriptural arrow from a new-birth text that might penetrate the joints of this churchly harness, it was maintained in many quarters, as I have already remarked, that regeneration was so subtle an operation as not to be cognizable by the affections. If one had obeyed God in the ordinances he was to presume that he had been regenerated, even though he might not be aware of any experience of religion in the heart. The general result was, of course, that the need of conversion was practically denied.

Such was the state of the best, or at least the most influential portion of Protestantism

in the earlier years of the eighteenth century. And what saith the Scripture? "If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness." If, now, you will remember what I said in the earlier part of this discourse as to the mighty wave of skepticism and irreligion that was pouring over the earth from the high places of intellectual thought; if you will remember that Christianity was by the learned regarded only as a subject of ridicule, unworthy of inquiry or discussion; if you will remember that worldly prosperity was causing men to feel independent of God; if you will take all these things into consideration, you will see that to human view Christianity was clean gone forever. The floods of ungodly men were sweeping on, and a corrupt and enervated church had neither doctrine nor life wherewith to stem the tide. You can therefore understand why the infidel element of the time was confident of a complete victory, and why the faithful few mourned with such a pathetic and bitter cry over the departing glories of Zion.

IV. For there were a few godly souls that humbly lamented the state of affairs, and were sending up their prayers to the

great Head of the church for the interposition of his mighty power. Bishop Burnett and Dr. Watts, and men of such spirit, were mourning, praying, and exhorting, while Bishop Butler and men of cool, steady faith were preparing their arguments to show the thinking minds of the day that it might be a sensible thing, after all, to consider the claims of a revealed religion.

But He who purchased the church with his own precious blood, saw from on high the situation and prepared his chosen agents. In the year 1703, three able and godly ministers of Christ, one in England, one in America, and one in Ireland, had each a son born to him, and these three infants were, in the providence of God, to become the men that were largely instrumental in the revival of true religion, severally, in the bosom of the three churches we have been considering. The names of these three children were John Wesley, Jonathan Edwards, and Gilbert Tennent. And a few years later there was born one whom no one church or land could claim as her own, George Whitefield, who with a heart as large as the world, traversed up and down its length and breadth, preaching the everlasting gospel to every creature,

and serving as a uniting bond between all those who loved our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and in truth.

To trace the lives, times, and works of these men, and to set forth the great awakening which God wrought through them, will be the object of the remainder of these discourses

II

John Wesley and the Movement in Great Britain

WE are now to look at John Wesley and the revival movement in the Episcopal Church of Great Britain —a movement commonly known as the rise of Methodism, and resulting, at length, in the formation of the Methodist denomination.

Two considerations, however, will prevent me from attempting anything like a detailed account of the particular historical or biographical facts in the case. One is, that it is simply impossible, in a single discourse, to portray, even with tolerable fullness, a movement so vast in its proportions, so mighty in its power, and so grand in its results as the rise of Methodism ; the other is, that it would be presuming upon

the intelligence of my audience to rehearse these common facts, so ably and frequently set forth by this influential people, regarding their early history. I shall take it for granted that you are already acquainted with the manner in which Wesley and his fellow-laborers were called and prepared to be leaders in this revival of religion so pre-eminently apostolic; and that you understand that this work was carried on by Wesley to the grandest results without any design or wish of founding a new church, but simply as a revival of true religion in the English Church. In fact, I trust that you perceive that this was not a work of Wesley, or of any other man, or any body of men, but of God, and that as such it was beset, opposed, and fought at every step by the great enemy of God. This is the feature of the movement that strikes my mind as worthy of special consideration—the grand spiritual conflict—and consequently I shall, in this discourse, simply call your attention to those points where Satan pitched his battle with the Lord and was so signally foiled. If, however, you find your knowledge of the history scanty, so that you cannot easily follow the thread of my remarks, I would advise you never

to read another work of fiction until you have faithfully perused this grand record of sublimest fact.

I think I see at least eight distinct points in this history where the Lord gained a grand victory over the great adversary of souls.

1. The first is where the enemy undertook *the destruction of the child*. Old tactics, these. He set Pharaoh's officers after the infant Moses, and Herod's soldiers after the infant Jesus. And in like manner he set the Epworth rabble to burn the house wherein was sleeping the little boy John Wesley.

It is well aflame before any of the household wakes, all is confusion and terror, each rushes for himself through window, or door, or whatever egress is possible, the mother literally passing through the fire. And as they gather outside looking anxiously in each others' faces by the glaring light of the burning dwelling, they discover that one of the large flock is missing. The little boy John is in there yet, upstairs fast asleep, while the roof above him is burning and his bed even is already taking fire. Madly the father attempts the passage of the stairs, but in vain. How the arch fiend exults ! How he will nip that precious bud, and destroy that potent germ ! But no ;

God hath otherwise ordained. The boy wakes, leaps from the bed, and flies to the window. Some kind-hearted peasants make a human ladder, one on top of another, and down comes the boy. John Wesley is saved to the world.

But this is not all. That escape stamped upon the mind of the thoughtful boy, and upon the heart of the prayerful mother, and upon the soul of the believing father, the idea of destiny. They felt that the escape was for a purpose. Henceforth the father planned, and the mother prayed, and the boy studied, feeling that God was with him, and that work was before him. Ah! this idea of destiny is a power. The great have it, and it furnishes courage and inspiration for many a dark hour. How, then, was the enemy doubly foiled! Instead of destroying the child he gave clear articulation to the secret thought of coming greatness in the Lord's cause. In after years Wesley had engraven on one of his portraits the emblem of a burning house, and underneath it the Scripture motto: "Is not this a brand plucked from the burning?"

2. The next point that I notice is where the adversary invaded the Epworth rectory, and beset the Wesley family with *spiritual*

manifestations. This table-tipping religion that is so vaunting itself in our day is not altogether a new thing. It is one of Satan's old methods of operation, which he brings forth from time to time, whenever he judges he can gain an advantage by it. The Wesley family seemed so surcharged with destiny to the Lord's cause that he would try anything and everything to lead them astray. The manifestations began in the Epworth rectory when John was under twelve years, at a most impressible age. And the Fox girls, or the Eddy brothers, could hardly produce greater demonstrations than those which came unbidden to this quiet family. Whistlings and knockings and moanings and trailing of garments, and opening and slamming of doors, and jumping of dishes, and even of so large an article as a bed, and many other demonstrations with a seeming intelligence behind them, answering questions, interrupting family devotions, showing special spite against certain prayers—these were the wonderful, yet clumsy methods of intrigue used by the disturbed prince of evil as he hovered around that noted family.

But they were received by that God-fearing and Bible-believing household just

as they always should be, as preternatural phenomena harmless enough if let alone—a sort of intriguing challenge from the unseen world that was to be met in the firm faith of God's word. Therefore none of the family was led astray from the eternal principles of revealed truth into wild vagaries or vain speculations. But on the contrary a great advantage was gained; for there was thus engendered among them a hearty practical faith in the supernatural, which must be the habitual possession of one who is to be valiant for the truth, and which was especially needed in that age when nature was so deified. A robust belief in God and in the devil is necessary to bold, efficient Christian character. Luther had such, of whom it is related that sometimes being awakened by noises in the night, he would listen a moment and then saying, "It is nothing but the devil," would turn over and quietly take another nap. Something of this spirit did these manifestations create in Wesley. They opened his mind to the practical facts of the supernatural realm, but made him fearless of the presence or power of evil beings. Thus again was the great adversary beaten by his own weapons.

3. Next is Wesley's escape from *mysticism and asceticism.* Surcharged as he was with religious feeling, and with the ideas of religious destiny, but still groping in spiritual darkness, not having yet learned justification by faith, he eagerly devoured in his student and early ministerial days those searching works of devotion that were then, and are still now, standard in their department, such as Thomas à Kempis' "Imitation of Christ," Jeremy Taylor's "Holy Living and Dying," and Law's "Serious Call," works that go probing the secrets of the heart and enjoining the strictest service of the spirit—works which may be read with the greatest profit by one whose piety is intelligent, healthy, and joyful, but which may prove a snare and a burden to one who has not learned the freeness of pardon in Christ. These works, I say, he eagerly devoured, and soon felt that to realize their holy teachings he must retire from the world and give his whole time to meditation and prayer. The life of a sort of Romish recluse became his ideal, as it has of so many earnest and devoted souls. Here, again, Satan rejoiced in hope, for he has had great success in this line of action, causing multitudes of those that might have

been heroes or angels of mercy to imprison themselves forever under the impression that thus they were best doing God service. And nothing would have been a grander stroke of satanic policy than to have slain John Wesley with the keen sword of Thomas à Kempis. But here again God saved him. His clear-headed and warm-hearted mother objected to the idea, and a discerning old Christian whom he providentially visited at this time broke in upon his dreams in words somewhat like these, "Young man, you can never serve God and go to heaven alone. You must either find or make companions." Thus was he saved, and it can never be said that John Wesley went, or tried to go, to heaven alone. No, but rather escorted by thousands whom he had been instrumental in teaching the way of life.

4. The fourth point I notice is his *escape from legalism*, a more dangerous foe even than mysticism, especially at that time when practical religion was at so low an ebb, and when even the common charities of life were so far neglected that to engage in them was deemed unusually meritorious. Companions, as advised, he found in his brother Charles, in Whitefield, Morgan, and

Kirkham, who with him constituted at Oxford the "Holy Club." And if religion was to be found in good works, surely these young men found it. Fasting twice a week, receiving the communion every Sabbath, losing no moment of the whole day from consecrated employment, all that could be spared from study and from prayer being given to the sick, to the poor, to the ignorant, to the prisoners, and, in fine, to every suffering and needy class of society so generally and strangely neglected in that formal age; no wonder that their fellow-students pointed the finger of scornful surprise and wondering amazement at lives so zealous and self-denying. What could be more natural than for these young men, thus toiling and thus ridiculed, to suppose that they had attained, that they were true and very excellent Christians, far exceeding the great mass of professors? And doubtless when the Wesleys turned their backs upon the cultured society of England to teach the wild Indian of America the knowledge of Christ, they did suppose that they were among the truest and sincerest followers of the Man of Nazareth that the world could show. Punctilious, zealous, self-denying, prayerful, who shall blame them for sup-

posing that they had attained to the essence of Christianity? But oh, how fatal the mistake had they stopped here! And yet how easy and natural to stop here, for who was there to suggest anything further or better than this self-denying life? For this even they were ridiculed, yea, persecuted for righteousness' sake. And were they not, therefore, according to the Saviour's own words blessed? Here, at least, the enemy thought to hold Wesley, thinking after all he would get no higher conception of religion than this with which so many are satisfied.

But God had ordered otherwise. On shipboard, in their passage to America, these Methodists rivaled the renowned Moravians in the strict performance of religious duties, but when the terrible storm arose, and all stood face to face with death, then it became evident to Wesley that these Moravians had something that he did not have—perfect trust, perfect peace, perfect love, that took away all fear—the heart securely resting in God, the same in danger as in safety. Here was something to which even the devoted Wesley was a stranger, and to which he felt he must attain. God would not allow him to rest.

Good works and a self-denying life could not satisfy him.

So we find him after a period of missionary labor, wearily, hungeringly, thirstily, crying out of the depths of his heart, as he caught sight of his native land on the return voyage, "I went to America to convert the Indians, but oh, who shall convert me? Who, what is he that shall deliver me from this evil, evil heart of unbelief? This have I found in the ends of the earth, that I have fallen short of the glory of God." And when some one suggested that he was unduly excited, he exclaimed, "I am not mad, but speak the words of truth and soberness."

And thus he mourned and thus he sought, till that memorable Wednesday evening at a quarter before nine o'clock, May 24, 1738, at the Moravian society meeting, when the burden that he had borne for a quarter of a century fell off, and the thirst wherewith for a quarter of a century he had thirsted, was slaked in the fullness of a precious draught from the stream of everlasting life. Now John Wesley, after twenty-five years of blind groping in feebleness, sees with a clear eye and holds with a firm grip and feels with a full heart the main essential

truth of Christianity. Now he *is* a Christian; now he is a man of power; now he will move the world. This was one of the grandest triumphs of God's Spirit that the world has ever seen, and the enemy, instead of hindering the discovery and attainment of this essence and strength of Christianity, only stamped its importance and preciousness all the more forcibly on the heart of this great movement.

5. The next point of victory was the humble, Christ-like *endurance of persecution* on the part of the Methodist preachers. Whitefield soon led Wesley into the open-air work, and he in turn many kindred spirits. The power of God worked mightily with them, so that in a few years the whole kingdom was moved. They went everywhere preaching the word to every creature. All classes heard with wonder, but particularly were the degraded and vicious obedient to the truth. The colliers of Kingswood, the wreckers of Cornwall, the soldiers of the army, and all such neglected and hardened classes were won to Christ by hundreds and by thousands. The English, the Welsh, the Irish, and even the phlegmatic Scotch, were all melted before the burning words of ardent love and holy

fire. This was more than the enemy could quietly endure, and in his rage he threw off disguise and turned his hand to open, brutal, savage persecutions. It seems almost impossible to believe that such things occurred in Christian England in the days of some of our grandfathers. They are more becoming the untaught heathen upon whose territory Christianity seemed an encroachment in the days of old.

But truth is stranger than fiction. These noble men, who without money and without price, so ardently toiled for a revival of the established religion of the realm, were treated by State officials and wild mobs alike as the veriest outlaws who were to be silenced at any price. Volumes might be written full of thrilling narrations of the sufferings and of the marvelous escapes of the Methodists in the first half-century of their career. They were arrested, fined, imprisoned, stoned, beaten, kicked, ducked, and maltreated in almost every possible way. To knock them senseless on the ground, and then to walk and jump on them, "to tread the Holy Ghost out of them," as their tormentors used blasphemously to say, was a favorite example of the perfect devilishness of the

spirit of brutal opposition that confronted these men of God. And the worst phase of it all was that these mobs were frequently set on openly or countenanced tacitly by the regular clergy of the Establishment, whose altars these Methodists were replenishing, and from whose hand they received the sacraments of the Lord's house.

Yet so plentifully was the spirit of the Master supplied that the inhuman policy failed; failed not only to deter these preachers from their work, but also to raise any resentful or bitter feeling in their breasts. It is marvelous how these men could suffer such indignities and yet go cheerfully on in their work, loyal still to the mother church and receiving the sacraments at her altars. Never, perhaps, were the Saviour's evangelistic directions more fully complied with. When they were persecuted in one city they fled to another, and oftentimes while yet sore and stiff with beatings and bruises, stood immediately up, meekly, yet earnestly to proclaim the word of the Lord. The adversary succeeded no better with brute force than with cunning intrigue.

6. Another point where a great victory was gained was in the *avoidance of fanat-*

icism. No such powerful religious work can be carried on without great arousement of the feelings, and the instances are not few where, in weak human nature, passion gains the advantage over reason at such times. Great mental agitation will frequently produce physical contortions that become in a measure epidemic and distract attention from the more important exercises of the soul. Satan, moreover, at such a time almost invariably steps in to counterfeit or unduly increase true emotion, till he brings disgrace on the whole work. In notable instances a mighty work of God has thus been brought to a mortifying and disgraceful end. Such was the case with the splendid work in London under Edward Irving in the present [19th] century. By this means the Great Awakening itself was badly marred in some parts of America. And if ever an opportunity was afforded to Satan to gain a victory in this regard, it surely was among these shouting Methodists. Excitement ran high, and wild demonstrations frequently drowned the preacher's voice. Visionary and excitable men had, of course, their supposed revelations from the Lord to do all manner of absurd things. But God so protected

the coolness and good sense of the Wesleys, who had already in their childhood made the acquaintance of the chief author of confusion, that he was in a large degree foiled, and the Methodist movement, noisy and demonstrative as it was in many cases, was nevertheless saved from any great vagaries of fanaticism. And, I ween, Satan was never more crestfallen than when he discovered that he could not turn the strength of this great movement into ranting, visions, vagaries, and general, profitless fanaticism.

7. Still another point wherein a great victory was gained was in reference to *doctrinal discussion*. There is a strange fascination in controversy. Men will fight for a truth that they will not think of obeying. The ages have been polemical, the Middle Ages especially. The Reformation was largely a war of doctrine. And we of this day can scarcely realize the zest and the heat of the Calvinistic and Arminian controversy in the period we are considering. Calvinism had been the orthodoxy of nonconformity, but Wesley proved an Arminian, while Whitefield, the great evangelist of the age, and the bosom friend of Wesley, remained a stanch Calvinist. These two giants in the cause could not agree.

Whitefield's Tabernacle rose near Wesley's Foundry. And now, thought Satan, for a grand theological fight that shall kill the spiritual revival. But these two men, warned of God as it would seem, came together, realizing the situation, and agreed to disagree in belief while working together in the same grand cause. They exchanged pulpits and gave to each other the right hand of fellowship to go on their several ways. Thus the Lord's army marched on in two great divisions instead of being compressed into one. Whitefield with Lady Huntington and the Calvinistic wing took one class of minds, and Wesley with the Arminian wing took another class, sweeping the whole field for God.

8. The last point that I will notice is in reference to *ecclesiastical ambition.* The Methodist societies grew so rapidly, counting in a few years their tens of thousands of members, that the idea of power and importance could not fail to be protruded. This people, at first so derided and despised, were becoming a strong body, and might very naturally be pardoned for glorying in the fact. The question of organizing a new church could not fail to be agitated, especially since the mother church was so

averse to adopting or acknowledging these new-born children. There was, therefore, every opportunity for the uprising of an ecclesiastical ambition and pride. But such a spirit would be fatal to the simplicity and purity of the spiritual interests of the body. Here lay a great danger. Here, then, was Satan's grandest opportunity. Ecclesiastical ambition, desire of earthly power and name—this has ever been and ever will be his most potent and most successful weapon. But it was long before he could wield it here. During the lifetime of Wesley that insinuating thought was kept wonderfully in abeyance.

This movement of Methodism was not to found a church as a party, or to establish any institution, but merely to save souls. It was not an ecclesiastical ambition, but a revival of religion. And this doubtless was the most potent reason that led Wesley to be so exceedingly cautious in regard to breaking with the Establishment. He repeatedly discountenanced the idea, forbidding his preachers to administer the ordinances, even when strongly urged by the people and the apparent necessities of the hour to do so. His attitude was, I believe, quite as much in the interest of spirituality

as of divinely ordained church order. At any rate it stands out as one of the marvelous phenomena of the time—that a pure and simple Christianity flourished so long and so vigorously without becoming leavened with party and worldly pride. Scarcely ever, I think, has the wily deceiver been kept so long outside an historical movement of the church before he could find an entrance.

And, therefore, as we review all these perils and escapes, the grand lesson that this movement was of God and not of man becomes indelibly stamped on our minds. If ever a man did what he did not intend to do; if ever a man was held in the hollow of God's hand; if ever a man was directed, molded, sustained, instructed, and guided by divine power, that was John Wesley. He was nothing, but the power behind him was everything. It is no part of my plan to trace the subsequent history of Methodism, or to forecast its future. It is certainly a very different thing to-day from what it was then. But it is with its early days that I am concerned. And what did it effect then? It put a new face on English history. It generated new ideas, infused a new spirit, created new facts. And this to the degree that no historian, however secu-

lar his aim may be, can ignore it. Religion was seen to be not a matter of form and ritual, but of knowledge and experience; not a weakling to be defended with laws and guns, but a *power* that could break its way anywhere and hold its ground everywhere.

And English history reads so differently because of it! True, the proud, cold church as a whole would not receive it; but nevertheless it saved her; yea more, it saved the nation. Why did not English deism roll on in its destructive course to its logical results? When France went on in her devilish frenzy till she made her capital a hell upon earth, why did England stop in her dangerous ways? The answer is plain: "When the enemy came in like a flood the Spirit of the Lord lifted up a standard against him."

III

Jonathan Edwards and the Movement in New England

WE have looked at the revival movement in old England as led by John Wesley, now let us look at the same movement in New England as led by Jonathan Edwards. I say the same move-

ment, for this Great Awakening, however different its manifestations might have been in different places, was all of the same mighty Spirit. Yet the scene that we shall now survey appears very different from that before considered, and the man whose life I shall now portray is of a type considerably removed from that of the great founder of Methodism. But if different, no less instructive. The men and their labors differed because their fields were different. New England had no dense populations of neglected, ignorant, irreligious, and vicious people. It had been but an hundred years founded ; the original settlers were men of earnest religious purpose. Religion was the great fact of their lives. And with their descendants at this time it was still so, though rather as a matter of theory than of heart experience. The church was the chief institution in every New England village, while next to it and tributary to it was the school. The State even was subservient. Every one was in some way connected with the church and conversant with its doctrines. These doctrines were the staple mental pabulum of the people. Newspapers were rare, but sermons were thick, and long too. The

clergy were well educated. Harvard and Yale were already founded for the express purpose of furnishing an able ministry. And under their leadership the whole population was intelligent.

Thus it came to pass that the Congregationalists have ever been so cultured a people. They are, perhaps, in proportion to their numbers more intellectual than any other denomination. From this fact two results have been apparent. First, when the Holy Spirit has been largely poured out and spiritual life has been earnestly maintained, they have presented a grand array of stable, cultured Christians. But when spiritual life has waned, their declension has been of the intellectual, rationalistic type. Hence the Unitarian defection and the great growth of skepticism and transcendentalism that has sprung up in and around Boston. While the irreligion of old England was ignorant and vicious, that of New England was intellectual and respectable. Therefore the man to lead the revival in old England was a man of heart-power, and the man to lead the revival in New England was a man of head-power. Not that Wesley was deficient in head, or Edwards in heart, but the one did his work

mainly through the heart, and the other through the head.

In briefly portraying my subject, let me put before you, first, the place; second, the man; third, the work; fourth, the consequences.

1. One of the most lovely and fertile spots to be found in generally barren and rugged New England, is a basin about seventy-five miles in circumference in the center of western Massachusetts. It is formed by the curvature of the mountain ranges that come down from the north, overlooked by the grim sentinels Tom and Holyoke, and windingly traversed by the Connecticut River. In the early ages perhaps it was a lake, but the river breaking through the mountain rock drained it, leaving rich meadows of alluvial deposit. Such a spot could not long be overlooked by the pioneer settlers, nor fail to fall into able and enterprising hands.

As early as about 1650, one Anthony Stoddard, a stanch Puritan, related by marriage to Governor Winthrop, bought from the Indians a tract of land in this mountain valley and began the settlement of what is now Northampton. This family of Stoddards, some of whom still dwell in

Northampton, have ever been renowned in the civil, classical, and religious annals of our country, two of whom, especially, have given guidance and inspiration to many a student for the ministry—the erudite author of the Latin grammar, and the sainted missionary to the Nestorians.

People of high standing and character from Boston were associated with Mr. Stoddard in the settlement of the town, so that it soon assumed a commanding importance. A church was, of course, constituted at once. The first pastor was a brother of the celebrated Dr. Increase Mather, of Boston ; the second, a son of Eliot, the apostle to the Indians ; and the third, Solomon Stoddard, the son of the founder of the town. This man made himself and his church famous among all the New England churches. He was of commanding personal appearance, of strong intellectual powers, and of fervent, earnest piety. He had graduated at Harvard, traveled abroad, and preached somewhat elsewhere, when at the age of twenty-nine he took the pastorate at Northampton, which he held until he was eighty-six, a period of fifty-seven years.

Consider for a moment the influence

such a man would wield, for such a length of time, in such a position, amid such a state of society. The son of the founder of the town, of fine talent and education, the minister of the parish for more than half a century, it is no wonder that he became a kind of oracle, a sort of divine authority. The Indians even so far caught the general impression as to regard him as a superhuman being, so that when, in one of the skirmishes of the time, a Frenchman leveled his gun at him, they kept him from firing by crying out in terror, "That man is Englishman's God."

In course of time Northampton became, as we might expect, an important center. The regions round about were tributary to it and took their impressions from it. Its church was a kind of authority for all the churches in that vicinity at least, and its influence was felt more or less all over New England. Probably no place except Boston stood before Northampton in general influence at this time. Mr. Stoddard, moreover, became very conspicuous in ecclesiastical circles for his advocacy of what has been termed, the "Half-way Covenant," a departure from the Cambridge platform regarding the terms of admission to the

Lord's Supper. The original settlers of New England, in constructing their platform, declared that a profession of personal piety was necessary to partaking of the Supper and to full membership in the church. Mr. Stoddard claimed that such a profession was not necessary, but that the Supper was a converting ordinance and could be partaken of by any who wished, and, in fine, that conversion was not necessary to full church-membership, or even to the filling of the ministerial office. His opinions were accepted by nearly all the neighboring churches and by numbers in various other parts of New England, and helped to bring about that state of spiritual deadness that preceded the great revival. He, of course, conducted his own church on this principle, and the consequence was that the Northampton church became very large, embracing the whole community without regard to personal religious experience. It was strong, wealthy, dignified, and self-important, but unspiritual. Yet to the credit of Mr. Stoddard it should be said that personally he was a godly man, and that his own piety and holy example prevented many excesses that might have been developed under such a system.

2. Thus much regarding the place, and now *the man*. When this influential pastor came to be above eighty years of age his people, as well as himself, began to look about for a colleague. Of course, so extraordinary a church must have an extraordinary pastor, even as a colleague, and such an one they found in the person of young Jonathan Edwards. He was not a stranger to the Northampton people, being the own grandson of their adored pastor, his talented daughter Esther having married the Rev. Timothy Edwards, of Windsor, Conn., whose fifth child and only son was this celebrated Jonathan. The family of Edwards was, like that of Stoddard, highly talented and distinguished. The father of Jonathan was a man of great learning, who ministered most ably to one church for sixty-four years, and only began to use notes at the age of seventy, apologizing to his people for it, telling them that his memory was failing somewhat, though his judgment was as good as ever.

No wonder that such an ancestry produced a son whose powers as a metaphysician and a philosopher have been frankly acknowledged by all the masters, both in Europe and America. At an early age he

showed his remarkable powers of mind, commencing the study of Latin at six, entering Yale before he was thirteen, and graduating with the valedictory at seventeen. He was especially observant and proficient in natural science, metaphysics, and mathematics. When less than twelve years of age he wrote to a gentleman in Europe a long and exact account of his observations of the habits of field-spiders, showing how they send their webs for long distances horizontally from one object to another. He read "Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding" at the age of fourteen, and wrote quite a metaphysical treatise himself about that time. He can also be said to have made in his youth the principal discoveries in astronomy, electricity, and chemistry that have since been announced to the world. For he always studied with his pen in his hand, noting down any thought that occurred to him, and in these notes, which he left behind him, are suggested quite a number of the important facts in physics then unknown, but which have since been made plain to the world.

An acquaintance with him at this time would have discovered only an incipient

philosopher or metaphysician. But God had other work for him to do. He had been from his early youth the subject of religious impressions, but it was during his college course that they ripened first into complete confidence in Christ, and then into his purpose to study for the ministry. His religious experience, though quiet and natural, was exceedingly thorough and intelligent, so that he carried to the study of theology, which he commenced on taking his bachelor's degree, a most earnest purpose and extremely accurate habits of thought. He took hold of theology just as he had of mathematics, using in fact many mathematical terms. A theological question he called a theorem in divinity; he "proved" everything as he advanced from one point to another, supplementing his demonstration of the main question with lemmas and corollaries.

After studying theology for two years he preached to a Presbyterian congregation in New York City, then was for two years a tutor in Yale, during which time he grew most wonderfully in grace and in knowledge. It was within this period, at different times, that he wrote those celebrated resolutions for the regulation of his life.

They are seventy in number, and cannot all be quoted here, but they show a mind terribly in earnest in its great life-work. Let me mention a few of them, to give an insight into the heart of the man.

"1. *Resolved*, That I will do whatever I think to be most to the glory of God and my own good, profit, and pleasure in the whole of my duration, without any consideration of the time, whether now or never so many myriads of ages hence."

"10. *Resolved*, When I feel pain, to think of the pain of martyrdom and of hell."

"22. *Resolved*, To endeavor to obtain for myself as much happiness in the other world as I possibly can, with all the power, might, vigor, vehemence, zeal, violence I am capable of, or can bring myself to exert in any way that can be thought of."

"37. *Resolved*, To inquire every night as I am going to bed wherein I have been negligent, what sin I have committed, and wherein I have denied myself. Also at the end of every week, month, and year."

"51. *Resolved*, That I will act so in every respect as I think I shall wish I had done, if I should at last be damned."

"63. On the supposition that there never was to be but one individual in the world

at any one time, who was properly a complete Christian: *Resolved*, To act just as I would do if I strove with all my might to be that one who should live in my time."

Such was the man, such his talent, and such his spirit when at the age of twenty-three he began to preach to the large, complacent, self-sufficient congregation of Northampton in 1727. The blight of unspirituality and worldliness was at this time on all the churches. No revival had been enjoyed by the congregation for about ten years. Yet the way of the Lord was preparing, and Edwards was to be one of his prime agents.

3. This young pastor at once laid down for himself the most rigid rules for *work*. He uniformly wrote two sermons a week, besides preparing various solid treatises for the press. Judging that he was not adapted to pastoral work he did not attempt it, but confined himself thirteen or fourteen hours each day at his study forging arguments for God. In about two years his grandfather died and he was left sole minister of this important parish. Most carefully he studied the situation that he, as the ambassador of God, might fully and worthily meet it. Divine truth was his weapon. He had no grace of style or delivery. He wrote plainly,

almost jaggedly, and read very closely, holding his face quite near to his manuscript. But the truth he most masterfully declared.

There was, as we may well suppose, an abundance of false doctrine prevalent in this mixed church. Many had begun to think that by uniting with the church and partaking of the sacrament they were doing something by which they might be saved, and thus they were losing sight of Christ. Edwards determined to meet this state of things by preaching boldly the essential truths of the Calvinistic system. Some of his friends were fearful and begged him to hold. But he heeded them not. He began by a series of discourses on "Justification by Faith," which he followed by others on "God's Sovereignty," proving that no one had done or could do anything to merit or purchase salvation; that God was under no obligation to save any one; that all men were under condemnation, not having a word to say; that nothing save God's forbearance kept any one out of hell for an instant. One of his favorite texts and frequent quotations was that strong passage from the Epistle to the Romans, "That every mouth may be stopped and that all the world may become guilty before God."

The Holy Spirit now began to be wonderfully poured out, sealing the truth of the pulpit, and such was Edwards' tremendous earnestness and argumentative power that he seemed for the time to carry all before him. He realized that all out of Christ were on the very verge of hell, and helpless in themselves to get away from the perilous position. Yea, more, they seemed to be slipping in without any power to hold themselves. All that men could do was to cast themselves helpless on the mercy of God and the merits of Christ, if perchance they might thus be saved. And mighty, mighty indeed were the results of this presentation of truth with the accompanying power of the Holy Spirit. Northampton was shaken, and the whole valley was moved, for Edwards did not confine his labors to his own pulpit. The realities of eternity seemed to stand in very sight, and men cried out in agony of soul. The world and its affairs seemed forgotten. Under the spell of those powerful sermons time and place were all swallowed up in the terrible realities of the eternal world. Once when he preached on the judgment some of his auditors really expected to see the Lord coming in the clouds as soon as the sermon

closed. And when he preached at Enfield his famous sermon entitled, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," from the graphic text, "Their feet shall slide in due time," such was the influence upon the congregation, which had assembled in a careless mood, that some of them actually caught hold of the benches to save themselves from slipping into hell. Yet there was nothing exciting in his manner, for standing quite still and reading very closely he scarcely raised his hand except to turn the leaves of his manuscript. But the truth was presented with strong argument, in a mathematical exactness of demonstration whose conclusions could not be avoided. And God was present in great power to send the truth home, so that some three hundred were hopefully converted in the Northampton congregation in the course of six months. This was in 1734–1735, a little previous to the more general awakening throughout the country. Edwards wrote an account of this powerful work, which was published in Boston, republished in London, and extensively circulated in England and Scotland as well as at home, thus preparing the way for the wide-spreading work that broke out so generally in 1740.

Into the particulars of this general work I cannot enter. Suffice it to say that about 1740 the revival reappeared, not only at Northampton and vicinity, but in almost every church throughout New England. The same indications of overwhelming spiritual power were manifest in many places under the ordinary ministry. In numerous instances the people would so cry out in public service, that pastors were obliged to pause in the preaching from time to time to allow the tumult to subside. And in some cases it was customary to carry out of the church to some neighboring house those that were overcome by the power, in order that the services at the church might proceed.

To add to the interest, Whitefield traversed the land, preaching to those immense audiences that frequently assembled in the open air because no church could contain them, and cavalcades of devoted friends accompanied him from one town to another, thus transmitting the enthusiasm from place to place. Edwards was delighted to have him visit Northampton, and himself sat in his own pulpit weeping like a child, as that matchless preacher swayed with his burning pathos

the auditors who were usually fed on the more argumentative sort of preaching.

Gilbert Tennent also came up from New Jersey and preached with most salutary effect in Boston and throughout southern Massachusetts and Connecticut. A newspaper was established for the express purpose of reporting the progress of the revival—the first religious newspaper, I believe, ever printed—and thus the friends of God were everywhere cheered and aided in their work.

A very moderate estimate of the number converted in the American colonies at this time is fifty thousand, which in proportion to the population would be equal to one million in our time. And many of these, it must be remembered, were people who had before maintained a form of godliness and were intelligently acquainted with Christian doctrine, but destitute of the power.

4. *The consequences.* The American revival was more of a work within the church than the Methodist movement. Wesley could get scarcely any countenance from the Establishment, so that he was obliged to labor outside among the neglected classes, and ultimately to found a new church. Edwards and the New England pastors generally reaped their harvest principally from

their own congregations. And yet even here the enemy found a foothold and stirred up the spirit of opposition. Some pastors, cold-hearted or unconverted, repelled the work so that in a considerable number of cases, particularly in Connecticut, new congregations were formed, calling themselves Separatists, the majority of whom ultimately became Baptists. And even where there was no formal division, there was a divergence of sentiment in regard to the value and propriety of the revival. As remarked in the previous chapter, there are almost always at such times high excitements and even extravagances among the demonstrative which greatly offend persons of cooler tastes and temperament. These things are emphasized by such persons and made the occasion for condemning the revival as a whole. This was the case even in New England. There was thus developed a party that opposed the movement, having for its champion a Doctor Chauncy, of Boston, who published several works against the revival. Edwards very naturally replied to him and became the champion of the revival party, and it is largely for this reason that he has so generally been regarded as its leader. He did not lead it as did Wesley by traveling

from place to place, overseeing the work. But it began with him, and found in him its principal defender.

Edwards was never an advocate of extravagances, but he well knew from his own studies that a clear apprehension of the truth of God might well strike the sinner with dismay, and he well knew from his own experience that a real view of the matchless beauties of the Saviour could transport the beholder out of the consciousness of earthly things. He himself had sometimes been so overcome with the glory of God in some of his retirements as to lose his consciousness for a considerable time. And his beautiful, saint-like wife, Sarah Pierrepont, had at times been so rapt in the contemplation of God as to lose her strength and to lie in a trance-like state for hours. He could, therefore, well sympathize with others of a more excitable nature who were sometimes carried beyond the bounds of moderation.

But a most solemn and instructive consequence of the work remains to be told. In the course of his studies and of his experience, Edwards came to see how improper and unsafe it was to admit to the church of God people who knew nothing

about experimental religion. He saw how radically wrong was the theory of his grandfather Stoddard on this point; how impossible it was under this system to maintain discipline, and what a damaging effect it produced upon the hearts of the members, leading them to think that they were thus in some measure the people of God, and so keeping them from Christ. For years he studied and pondered the subject, and after a time wrote his celebrated treatise on the "Religious Affections," for the purpose of showing what true religion was, and what feelings one ought to possess in order to be a member of Christ's visible people. Finally he came to the conclusion that he could no longer admit any to the church unless they made a credible profession of faith in Christ. He was well aware that this decision would cost him dearly, but he could not violate his sacred convictions.

At last the issue came on this wise. It was the custom under the system of Mr. Stoddard, when any one was to be married, to first unite with the church in order to proper standing as the head of a family. In the autumn of 1748, when Edwards had been pastor of the church about twenty

years, a young man intending to be married, presented himself for membership. This was a fair place for Edwards to declare himself, as his mind was now fully made up. The young man asked for membership in Christ's church, not because he was anxious to confess Christ, but because he was to become the head of a family and desired the proper standing for that position. The pastor then made known his sentiments, and soon after called the leading men of his church together and laid the matter before them, asking that he might preach a few sermons on the subject, explaining the change in his views. But to this request they would not consent, fearing that so able a reasoner would win many to his side. On the other hand, they immediately set measures on foot to remove him from the pastorate. The whole town was stirred in view of such an innovation, and the majority determined that they never would yield or be convinced. Many of the influential men in town had been admitted to the church by Mr. Stoddard as unregenerate persons, and to refuse to admit any more upon that basis, was virtually to say that *they* had no right in the church. And should it be that their

high standing in the community was to be lowered by the theological opinions of a single man? Should they allow that this young Mr. Edwards had a truer conception of propriety than the great Mr. Stoddard, who had been their renowned leader for more than half a century? No, indeed. Of course the evil heart of unbelief and the machinations of the adversary were at the bottom of it all. But traditional ecclesiastical customs are powerful and subtle weapons.

I cannot tarry to detail the controversy; but after two years of sad, and, on the one side, shameful contention, a council called from the neighboring churches that had been under Mr. Stoddard's influence, by a majority of one dismissed Jonathan Edwards from the pastorate of the Northampton church. Satan was jubilant, and even went so far as to induce the church to pass a resolution forbidding Edwards ever to preach in that pulpit again, even as a temporary supply.

Thus was the leading minister of all New England, and the champion of the great revival, wounded in the house of his friends and shamefully ejected from one of the first pulpits in the land, simply for con-

tending for the purity of Christ's church. After waiting for some time he received a call to the western part of the State, to the joint work of preaching to a frontier church and laboring as missionary among the Indians. He accepted it and toiled most devotedly in this situation for several years, during which time he wrote his ablest work, his treatise on the "Freedom of the Will," which has made his name famous over all the world. From this obscure station he was very unexpectedly called to the presidency of what is now the College of New Jersey, at Princeton, an institution that grew out of the spirit and needs of the Great Awakening. He had just entered upon his duties there when death cut him down, at a time and in a position where it seemed that his best and greatest work could be done. So it appeared to his friends as they stood around his bed, and supposing him unconscious, they gave vent to their thoughts, lamenting his loss. But the dying hero heard them, and rousing himself he said, "Trust in God and ye need not fear." These were his last words.

But Satan's victory did not prove so grand as it at first appeared. Yea, it turned

out to be a defeat. For the humble, quiet, Christlike spirit with which the great man bowed to his fate, exchanging with cheerfulness one of the first pulpits in the land for a lonely mission to the Indians, put to shame and convicted his opposers, so that some of them, even in his lifetime, came to him and with bitter, repentant tears confessed their sin.

Attention was moreover called to the principle in debate, and the denomination, as a whole, saw that Edwards was right, and adopted his practice. So that it has, after sloughing off the Unitarian element, been saved to evangelical principles. For years Stoddardism has been almost unknown among the Congregational churches. To be sure there are some of their clergy even now that seem to advocate something like it, and there always will be the logical tendency to it so long as infant baptism is practised, which is the root of the whole evil. But should any adopt it, it will bring the old story over again, a corrupt church, and a departure from the faith.

Again, the respite which Edwards enjoyed from the labors of so exhausting a pastorate, gave him leisure to produce those profound works which have done so much for

the establishment of a correct theology. So that there is no name of which the Congregational churches are more proud to-day than that of Jonathan Edwards. Just as the glory of Christ shone out, and was in great measure achieved by his deep and bitter humiliation, so it was with Edwards. He did not live to enjoy the victory on earth, but it *came*, as it always will come, sooner or later, to those who stand by the truth and suffer for its sake.

And last, the great revival to which he gave so much of his best strength, and for which he suffered so much disgrace, has assumed its true place in history, and is ever being better understood by those who are truly on the Lord's side. Those who labored in it are remembered, while those who opposed it are forgotten. Chauncy is a name unheard, while Edwards is on every tongue. "The name of the wicked," and of those who come to be in any manner arrayed, even though unwittingly, on the side of the wicked, "shall rot, but the righteous shall be an everlasting remembrance." "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever."

IV

Gilbert Tennent and the Movement in the Middle Colonies

HAVING noted the revival movement in New England among the Congregationalists, we are now to consider it in the Middle Colonies among the Presbyterians.

But we must, at the outset, remember that the Presbyterian Church of America was at this time in a situation quite different from that of its sister denomination already considered. Instead of being old, strong, well-established and equipped, it was rather in the weakness and destitution of infancy, and lacking somewhat also in homogeneousness. The first Presbyterian church that was fully established in this country was that of Philadelphia, in 1703, the very year in which Wesley and Edwards and Tennent were born, consequently the denomination could not be very large when these men came upon the stage of active life. It had not then, as it has now, a General Assembly, various synods, numerous presbyteries, and strong institutions of learning. There was, at the

commencement of this period, but one synod, that of Philadelphia, consisting of less than half a dozen presbyteries. Yet the denomination, actually so small and apparently insignificant, was potentially and prospectively large and important. The prominent part it had acted in European affairs, the large constituency it there possessed, with the strong incoming tide of immigration, and the wide field here opening before it, made it of great value in the religious history of this continent. Therefore God, in his gracious visitation of his people at this time, could not fail to have in tender and high regard this promising nucleus of a strong church. There was need that this important denomination should receive such divine impulses as should make its coming career strong for the truth and the life of vital godliness.

This church had, in common with others, fallen considerably away from the true life and walk of a Christian people. Its creed, as we have seen, was as good as those of its neighbors, in fact better ; but the interpretation put upon it, and the practice growing out of it, were damaging enough to vital religion. The Presbyterians have, indeed, never formally held, as have the Con-

gregationalists, that unregenerate persons ought to be admitted to full membership and to the ministry. But they have held, or at least numbers of them held at this time, that it was quite difficult, in fact impossible, to discover from the affections whether regeneration had taken place or not. The prevailing sentiment was, that it was taken for granted that all those who had been baptized and were not scandalous in their lives, *were* regenerate without regard to their emotions or affections. In fact, baptism was thus practically regarded as a converting ordinance. A conscious experience of the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit was not insisted upon, and hence a large portion of the Presbyterian membership was without vital piety.

Another thing to be noticed is, that this church, though exceedingly tenacious that her ministers should be none other than thoroughly educated men, had nevertheless no institution for their training. She was dependent, therefore, for the care of her fast-forming congregations in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware, upon such ministers as emigrated from Europe, or those that were educated at the Congregational colleges of New England. The

supply from the former source was doubtful both as to number and quality, while that from the latter was not exactly in accord with the customs and spirit of Presbyterianism.

The great need, then, of this denomination was a revival of true religion and a supply of true ministers. These blessings God was pleased to send in considerable degree through the instrumentality of the *Tennent family*.

I have placed the name of Gilbert Tennent foremost in this movement, because he was the most distinguished member of this noted family. Yet he was not such a pre-eminent and world-widely recognized leader among the Presbyterians as was Wesley among Methodists, or even Edwards among Congregationalists. Perhaps the genius of Presbyterianism would not admit of any one great hero. Its distinguishing characteristic is steadiness and moderation. It occupies middle ground, avoiding all extremes, and hence can apparently have no grand leader in any particular direction. The fiery heart of Methodism may appropriately exhibit such a fervent hero as Wesley, and the intellectual soil of Congregationalism might produce such a mental

hero as Edwards. But how is it possible for steadiness and adherence to the golden mean to set forth a pre-eminent leader ?

The Tennent family, God's chosen agent of blessing to the Presbyterian Church, consisted of the father, William, and four sons, Gilbert, John, William, and Charles, all five able ministers of the gospel. They were natives of Ireland, and formerly, while the sons were children, members of the Episcopal Church. But God in his providence touched their hearts and led them forth into the wilds of America, and into the more congenial home of the Presbyterian body. About the year 1720 we find the father pastor of a small church on Neshaminy Creek, Bucks County, Pa., about ten miles north of Philadelphia. This senior Tennent was a man of most excellent education, and thoroughly filled with the Holy Ghost—one of the forerunners, as was the senior Wesley, of the great awakening. God was using him for ends far beyond his own knowledge. His heart was moved by the condition of affairs. He looked upon the young church of his choice, needing a ministry but having no schools ; he looked upon his own four boys growing up about him, needing an educa-

tion but having no opportunities, and he determined, lone man though he was, and poor at that, to do what he could in the strength of the Lord to supply this pressing need. His own little dwelling had no extra rooms, but the trees of the forest were growing all around, and strong, honest muscle lay in his arm. And therefore, taking his axe, in true imitation of the sons of the prophets of old, he felled trees and built a log house of about twenty feet square, which he devoted to the purpose of sacred learning.

In the discussions which afterward arose, his opponents derisively dubbed it "Log College," and as such it has passed into history. In marked contrast with the stately four-story brick and stone edifices that we are wont to call theological seminaries was this lowly cabin of the wilderness, and in marked contrast with the richly endowed faculties and heavily laden library shelves that we deem necessary to the conduct of such institutions was this lone and poor backwoods parish minister, with the few books at his disposal. But perhaps never in modern times has any institution of sacred learning been more honored of God than was this. The classical training here ob-

tained was of no mean quality, for it may be doubted if the students of Princeton today could furnish better Latin theses than did the graduates of Log College; but the chief glory was that the Holy Ghost was there in large measure. There this man of God with his four sons, and many other young men looking forward to the ministry, studied and prayed and became filled with intellectual and spiritual might. The place became the headquarters of the spiritual element of the Presbyterian Church. These men were of the same stamp with Wesley and Edwards, believing in a religion of the heart that could be known and felt, in distinction from a religion of creed and ritual whose existence must be guessed at.

This school had been in operation about fifteen years at the time when the revival wave rose so high during Whitefield's visit to this country; and it had, of course, sent forth quite a number of young and zealous ministers who entered warmly into the work. Among these were the four Tennent brothers, Gilbert, who settled in New Brunswick, New Jersey, John and William, who successively occupied the pulpit at Monmouth or Freehold, and Charles, whose field was in Delaware.

Perhaps in no way can we better understand the spirit and temper of these men, and learn how intensely real to them were divine things than by noting several incidents of their remarkable lives.

The story of *John's conversion* and brief ministry is well calculated to bring tears and smiles in quick succession. He had been an exemplary youth, his only apparent sin being merely a too great indulgence in temper. But when he was brought under conviction his anxiety and anguish were exceedingly intense, causing him to pray unceasingly for four successive days and nights. Toward morning of the fourth night he was quite overcome, the power of speech departed, and his attendants supposed him to be dying. Then in this dire extremity the peace of God took possession of him, his strength revived, and he broke out in rapturous praises, telling all whom he could find of the great things God had done for his soul. He gave the freshness of his youth and his new-found joy to the pastorate at Freehold, and in less than two years, when consumption cut him down, his congregation was completely transformed from a careless, lifeless people into one of the greatest devotion, spirit, and

earnestness. He fairly bore them on and in his heart, so that his great care in dying was for them, lest they should be left as sheep without a shepherd, a regard which they most fully reciprocated, lamenting most deeply his loss. There is still extant a fragment of an old manuscript book kept by the session of his church, in which, in a minute of his death, he is called "the reverend and dear Mr. John Tennent, the most laborious, successful, well-qualified, and pious pastor this age afforded, though but a youth of twenty-four years five months and eleven days." He had lived so near heaven, and had so carried his people with him, that it seemed to them that no one could possibly fill his place. His brother William, however, most completely met the want, having been peculiarly qualified by one of those rare experiences that so wonderfully put a man in sympathy with the other world, namely, a trance.

The story of *William's trance* has been often told, and yet it will bear repetition. He was at the time studying with his brother Gilbert in New Brunswick, and so urgently applied himself to his books as to fall sick, apparently with consumption. During his sickness his religious hopes became ob-

scured, which added to his weakness and carried him fast toward the grave. One day, while conversing with his brother in reference to his spiritual condition, he fainted and died to all appearances. The body was laid out according to the usual custom, and an hour appointed for the funeral the next day. His regular physician, however, who was much attached to him, was absent from home at the time of his supposed death, and on returning at evening was exceedingly surprised at the event, and after examining the body expressed doubts as to whether death had actually taken place, thinking that he could perceive a little warmth in the region of the heart. He begged, therefore, for the privilege of attempting to restore consciousness, which was very reluctantly granted, for the relatives were perfectly satisfied that the young man was dead. The funeral, however, was postponed till the third day, the physician meanwhile using every means of restoration within his power, but in vain. The third day and the time of the funeral arrived, when the determined doctor begged for one hour more, and when that was gone for half an hour more, and when that was gone for a quarter of an hour more. By this

time Gilbert, at whose house the strange scene was passing, became somewhat impatient with the physician, and entering the room declared that it was shameful to be thus working over a dead man, and demanded that the funeral exercises should immediately be proceeded with. At this critical moment the supposed corpse opened its eyes and groaned, and in the course of two hours more was restored to a sort of consciousness, yet his recovery was very slow, and for a time extremely doubtful. And when at length assured, as to his bodily life, his friends discovered to their consternation that he had no knowledge of his former life or acquirements. The work of his education was begun over again by teaching him the alphabet, and proceeding through the lessons of childhood. But one day, when reciting his Latin lesson from "*Cornelius Nepos*," he suddenly started, clapped his hand upon his head, hesitated a moment, and then said, "It seems to me I have read that book before"; and in a short time the memory of his former knowledge came back to him as of old.

But the most interesting feature of the case is his experience during the three days in which he was apparently dead,

and the influence that it had on his after-life. He never alluded to it descriptively, except when pressed by his friends to do so; for, he said, it was, like Paul's rapture into heaven, unutterable. It was something so sacred and so far beyond the power of earthly language to describe, that it was almost useless and well-nigh sacrilegious to attempt any narration of it. He promised, however, to leave among his writings some account of it. But he died amid the confused times of the Revolutionary War, and his papers were lost and destroyed, so that we shall never have a minute description of this precious experience. Suffice it to say, that he felt himself transported to heaven, where he saw an indescribable glory and heard unspeakable words and unearthly music, and was just about to join himself to the happy company of angels, when his attendant put his hand upon his shoulder and said: "You must go back"; this gave him a pang so that he groaned, and opening the eyes of his body, saw the physician and his brother bending over him and realized that he was yet, or again, on earth. The period of his absence did not seem to him more than twenty minutes, but it gave

him such a view of the glory and reality of heaven, and of the comparative insignificance and unsubstantiality of earthly things, that he became ever after chiefly engaged with "that world," so that it was with difficulty that he could attend to earthly matters sufficiently to keep his material interests in proper condition. For three years, as he averred, that heavenly scene was never out of his mind, and during nearly half a century that he lived after it, to preach the gospel, it stamped him peculiarly as an ambassador from the other world. His obliviousness of earthly matters and methods seemed in some instances an apparent damage to him, bringing him into various difficulties.

Yet God provided for him, and on one occasion seemed to grant him *miraculous deliverance*. It was on this wise. Some enemies of the gospel brought an action at law against him, wherein for his defense, and in accordance with the truth, he would need to prove an alibi, he having been absent in Maryland on a preaching tour at a certain specified time. Had he been like other men versed in and dependent on the methods of the courts, he certainly would have sent to Maryland and procured wit-

nesses to prove the alibi. But he did no such thing, paying no attention whatever to the affair at all, except to repair to Trenton, at which place the court sat, on the day for the trial, trusting in the Lord for acquittal. Some of his legal friends approached him, and finding that he had procured no witnesses, begged him to ask for a postponement, feeling confident that he would be convicted. He would not listen to their advice, however, but started for the court-house at the appointed hour, conscious of his own innocence, and confident that the great God of that glorious heaven whose wonders he had seen would in some way take care of him. As he passed along the street, a man and his wife accosted him, asking if his name was not Tennent. On his replying yes, and inquiring if they had any business with him, they answered that they were from Maryland, where he had been preaching, and that they had both been warned in a dream, thrice repeated, that he was in Trenton needing their assistance; and that in obedience to these dreams they had immediately come to his aid. He took them along to the court-house, where they also found one of the tools of the scheming

persecutors so troubled in conscience at the part he was playing in the wicked plot that he made full confession. By the testimony of these three persons Mr. Tennent was of course triumphantly acquitted according to his trust in God.

Other remarkable incidents might be cited. But we must leave these personal narrations to pursue the course of the general work of God at this period.

It can be seen at a glance that the presence of Log College, sending forth a ministry of such spirit and power, could not fail to make a marked impression amid a church composed in a large degree of formalists, who had no sympathy with so earnest an evangelicity. And it was most natural that a kind of hostility should spring up against these earnest men, as against irregular enthusiasts. Nor could these zealous souls, on their part, easily brook the lifeless sort of religion that prevailed in too many of the churches, and they were not slow, and perhaps not very discreet in their condemnation of cold formalism.

By degrees, therefore, the Presbyterian church became divided into two parties known as the "*Old Side*" and "*New Side*,"

and at each meeting of the synod some measure would very likely be passed that in some way bore upon the point of difference between them. Thus matters went on from year to year till, in 1738, the synod having, of course, a majority of Old-Side men, passed a decree that no presbytery should license any candidate, not a graduate of a regular European or New England college, until he had first passed an examination before the synod as to his literary qualifications. This was aimed against Log College men, who, though well informed in classical and theological studies, were doubtless quite deficient in the arts and sciences, and might fail in these departments before a critical and really hostile synod.

Gilbert Tennent had now been pastor some ten years at New Brunswick, and was a man of considerable power; William was at Freehold, also a strong man; and a goodly number of the Log College men were close about them, making up, for the most part, the presbytery of New Brunswick. These zealous and stanch souls believed that fidelity to gospel truth demanded resistance to ecclesiastical error. Consequently, in the course of a year they

showed their strength and determination by licensing a Log College man, without requiring him to pass an examination before the synod.

Another act which the synod had passed was that no minister should preach within the bounds of a brother minister's parish without first obtaining his consent. This was to prevent these earnest revival men from itinerating through the country and preaching wherever they could find a willing congregation. This decree also the New-Side men disregarded, and continued to go anywhere and everywhere that the way seemed to open, preaching the gospel with great power and success.

Meanwhile, the memorable year of 1740 was close at hand, and the revival power was increasing everywhere. Whitefield came up from Georgia through these colonies, and, of course, sought out such kindred spirits as were the Tennents. In Gilbert he found a man not only after his own heart, but with considerable of his own power. He took him for a traveling companion as far as New York, and there, as an auditor himself, sat listening with rapt interest to this hitherto comparatively obscure preacher. And the testimony of

Whitefield was, that he never heard such a searching sermon. "He is," said he, "a son of thunder, and fears not the face of man."

After the great itinerant had gone on to Boston and lighted the fires there and throughout New England, as he returned through New Jersey he advised Gilbert Tennent to make the *tour of New England* after him and continue the work which he had begun. Naturally, being a modest and timid man, he would have shrunk from so great an undertaking, which was to go among entire strangers outside the bounds of his own denomination, and that too in the footsteps of so brilliant a preacher as Whitefield, and to so cultured a center as Boston. Well might a Log College man hesitate, according to earthly standards, to undertake such a work. But he, with true apostolic spirit, conferred not with flesh and blood; but, believing himself to be called by God, went, and preached with magnificent success for three months in Boston, and was instrumental in the conversion of a great multitude of souls. As he retraced his steps through Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New York, he left a fire behind him in almost every village.

A curious fact of his preaching was that in many places his sermons did not seem to produce any immediate marked result in the way of sudden awakenings or conversions, which were then so common. But in a few days after he was gone, those who had listened to him would be struck under conviction, and a blessed work would be the result. When in the vicinity of New Haven, so great was his fame that some of the students of Yale walked fourteen miles to hear him.

This recognition by Whitefield and this successful preaching tour abroad gave Tennent confidence and independence. He had, moreover, gotten more completely into the length and breadth and depth of the general revival work, so that when he arrived home he took a bolder stand than ever before against its opposers. He felt himself called of God to rouse the slumbering and dead orthodoxy of the Presbyterian church, and he soon preached a terribly scathing sermon against the Old-Side party, which was published and widely circulated. It was commonly known as the "*Nottingham sermon*," being delivered at a village of that name. And a keen-edged blade it was. He was particularly able in this line,

the denunciatory seeming to be his forte. He was of the true Elijah stamp, so much so that he seems to have imitated him in his personal appearance, having worn on his journeys a leathern girdle about his loins and allowed his hair to fall down uncut upon his shoulders.

The Nottingham sermon brought matters to a crisis, so that at the next meeting of the Synod the Tennents and their sympathizers, in fact, the Presbytery of New Brunswick, were excluded from the body. This Presbytery, however, nothing daunted, went on its way rejoicing, and, finding sympathizers in the vicinity of New York, formed with it the Synod of New York, into which was gathered all the revival party, while the anti-revival party still ruled the Synod of Philadelphia. And thus the great enemy of the church succeeded in arraying the first two synods of the Presbyterian Church in America against each other.

Yet in spite of these contentions among the leaders, the spiritual work among the people rolled on mightily with all those who did not fight against it, of whom, however, there were not a few. But in the course of time, which is a great adjudicator of all strifes, it became evident that this

warfare was singularly like that between the house of Saul and the house of David. The new party of youthful spirit and inspiration waxed stronger and stronger, while the old party of dignity and legitimacy waxed weaker and weaker. Moreover, the two parties began to understand each other better and to be more conscious of their own errors and indiscretions, so that after seventeen years of separation the two synods were reunited under the name of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia.

And no one labored more for this reunion than Gilbert Tennent himself. Soon after the separation he was called to a congregation in Philadelphia that had been gathered under the preaching of Whitefield. During a pastorate here of nearly a score of years he of course came into close contact with many of the better sort of the "Old-Side" party and learned somewhat of them. In fact, he became quite different himself in his style of preaching, laying aside his furious fire and becoming more argumentative and intellectual. Indeed, one of his old admirers declared that he never was worth anything after he went to Philadelphia, for he then took to writing his sermons and dropped out of his impassioned

appeals extemporaneously delivered. But Presbyterians cannot long be enthusiasts or extreme partisans ; they must ever come back to the mean of moderation.

But the thing of special note and practical instruction is that the "New-Side" or revival party, once so despised and derided, became the leading, active, progressive element in the reunited church. Log College was the germ from which have grown the renowned and godly institutions at Princeton. The very site of that insignificant hut is now sacred to the heart of the great Presbyterian body. After the cabin had been torn down and the logs of which it was composed scattered, a fragment of one of them was found and rescued from oblivion, from which a cane was made and presented to the venerable Doctor Miller, of Princeton, as a precious relic of so sacred a shrine. And the men who were once condemned and rejected as irregular and pestilent enthusiasts whose mouths ought to be stopped are now regarded as the true heroes of the church, whose names are held in the highest veneration.

In fact, the same thing that we saw in the case of Wesley and of Edwards we see here in the case of the Tennents. Yea,

we have seen the same thing so many times in all ages that it is high time that the lesson was learned. How many times, when martyr fires have been furiously lighted, must

> The hooting mob of yesterday in silent awe return,
> And gather up the ashes into memory's golden urn,

before we shall learn that the men who have the spirit of Christ are the men who are owned of Christ?

But let us not leave this subject without reminding ourselves afresh of the fact that in all such cases the power is of God and not of man. It was not the natural sagacity and foresight of these men that wrought the glorious work of establishing the Presbyterian Church of America as a true, spiritual body, instead of a false and dead establishment. It was God that made the senior Tennent equal to the task of furnishing a spiritual ministry for the young church. The overruling hand is so clear in it all! Who can look at the lives of Wesley, Edwards, and Tennent, all born in the same year, possessed of the same spirit, and producing for three great denominations the same results, though in widely different spheres, and knowing for a

long time nothing of each other's work, who, I say, can review these facts and not be convinced that the power was of God and not of man? Wesley in his struggles at Oxford, Edwards in his arguments at Northampton, and Tennent in the seclusion of Log College, are all moved by one and the same spirit for one and the same purpose.

V

George Whitefield, the Cosmopolitan Evangelist

HUS far in these lectures I have looked at the work in the several fields and denominations, taking especial note of the leaders in each department. But I have carefully endeavored not to lose sight of the fact that the whole was one great work of God, not arising from any one agency nor confined to any one people or dependent on any one leader. The holy fire broke out in many different places, and, spreading in all directions, enkindled the whole English-speaking empire. But as every great movement has its representative character, the Great Awakening had its pre-eminent preacher,

George Whitefield—than whom, I believe, a greater of his kind is not to be found in the history of the whole church. He is emphatically the representative man of the great revival of the eighteenth century. No one country or denomination can claim him. He was born in England, but died in America. He was baptized in an Episcopal church, but was buried in a Presbyterian meeting-house. He is commonly reckoned a Methodist, yet never technically belonged to that denomination. He received Episcopal ordination, yet sometimes broke bread for the Congregationalists. He was an exceptional character who soared above all party lines or ecclesiastical boundaries. His citizenship was in heaven, and he seemed to fly over the earth preaching the everlasting gospel to every creature, not allowing himself to be holden to any place or party.

Of course we have not exact accounts and statistics of the labors of the apostles, but the probability is that no man ever traveled so far or preached so many times to so many people within the same period of years as did Whitefield. His parish embraced England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, West Indies, Maine, New Hampshire, Ver-

mont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia. And over this wide domain he swept like a flying angel time after time for thirty-four years, crossing the Atlantic Ocean thirteen times and preaching over eighteen thousand sermons to audiences varying from one hundred to thirty thousand people, and all this before the days of railroads and steamships.

But these dry facts do not fully let us into the unearthly, majestic, and sublime heart of the man. Few, I fear, understand him. The world has not given him a niche as a hero. He is so far above the range of the experience of ordinary men! He had so little permanent connection with earthly affairs. He wrote no theology, he founded no church, he left no children, he reared no monument. He did none of those things by which men are commonly remembered and appreciated in the world. His whole interest was in heaven and in eternity. "*Astra petamus*" was the motto on his seal, "Let us seek the stars." His only care was to save men for the world that is to come. He preached as Apelles painted, for eternity. He is not to be measured as

are others. Nor are others to be measured as is he. He is an exceptional character, an exhibition of what the Spirit of God can do with poor, weak humanity, a personal exponent of that mighty wave of divine power that visited the world at that time. He comes nearer to John's vision of the flying angel having the everlasting gospel to preach to every creature than any other man. The adjective "seraphic" has been frequently applied to him, and not without reason, yet in using it we must be careful not to picture to ourselves a dainty saintliness, for he was rather a warrior angel, charging boldly upon the hosts of sin, often faint, bleeding, panting, and covered with the dust and gore of the battle.

But I must not deal too much in generalities. We need to consider three things in order to understand the wonderful story of Whitefield's preaching: 1. His constitutional fitness for a preacher. 2. His religious experience and call to the ministry. 3. The divine power that was abroad in the world at the time.

1. *He was an orator born. He had, in the first place, that sensitive, plastic, imaginative, nervous constitution that took in the impression of all things with intense reality.* His

soul was like the photographer's plate that needs but the light to receive the impression of all things around; or like the chords of the Æolian harp that want but the breath of the winds to awaken the sweetest music. His heart was alive to impressions from nature, from men, from spirits, from angels, and from God. The ear of his soul was open to earth, to heaven, and to hell, to time, and to eternity. He was, therefore, a living reservoir of truths, facts, emotions, illustrations, all burning hot within him.

And his *power of expression* was as great as his *susceptibility to impression.* His was one of the grandest voices that the world has ever listened to, so powerful and yet capable of such exquisite modulation. It could be heard a mile in the open air when he thundered the terrors of Sinai, or could be reduced to a thrilling whisper as when he said, "Hark! Hark!" bidding his hearers listen for the groans of the prostrate Saviour in the dark shadows of Gethsemane. The expression of his face too, changing at will from that of a radiant angel to that of an angry demon! The glare of his eye, the wave of his hand, the action of his whole body, and his copious, yet honest tears, all conspired to make him the per-

fect orator. He was, moreover, an invalid much of the time, and thus keyed up to that extreme nervous tension that is sometimes so dreadfully helpful to the public speaker. For many years he was accustomed to vomit quantities of blood after preaching, which seemed to come as a relief to his surcharged system, so completely and literally was his life given to his work.

He could throw himself *en rapport* with almost any occasion, particularly with the grand, the terrible, the thrilling, and the sublime. A thunderstorm was his delight. In his youth he once took to the fields in the midst of one, in the darkness of the night, and tried to improve the awful scene in getting some idea of the judgment day. Some of his grandest sermons were preached in the midst of thunderstorms, using the clouds, the darkness, the thunder, the lightning, and the rainbow for the illustrations of his subject. To such a man the occasion and the circumstances were instruments of power where to others they would have proved hindrances and obstacles. The tumult of a mob, and the angry roar of an opposing multitude drew him out to his grandest efforts; it would seem that sometimes he almost courted

them. And yet, there was nothing in him that approached at all to coarseness or rudeness, for nothing delighted him more than the attendance of the cultured. He was especially pleasing and successful as an orator in Lady Huntingdon's chapel, where were gathered the select few, such as Chesterfield and Bolingbroke and Garrick and Hume, as he was at Moorfield, where he contended like a charging war horse, for a whole day, with the rude, coarse, devilish mob of twenty or thirty thousand vagabonds. He had been intimate with various classes of people, and was at home in the dialect and scenes of each. Once preaching to the sailors in New York, he so graphically described a storm at sea carrying away the masts and throwing the ship on her beam ends, that when he exclaimed, "What next?" his sailor audience were so carried along that they rose in their seats and shouted right out in church, "Take to the life-boat!" "Yes," said Whitefield, "to the life-boat, Jesus Christ, the only refuge amid the storm of the wrath of Almighty God." Numerous instances of this sort are given where he so carried his audience with him that they were transported to the scene he was describing.

2. But I pass to the second point: *His religious experience and call to the ministry.* Nothing but that heartfelt experience of eternal realities could ever have so called out those marvelous powers of his in the cause of religion. Had he not been led into the ministry, he probably would have been an actor. Unlike Wesley and Edwards and Tennent, Whitefield was not born and nurtured in the ways of piety. He was the son of a tavern-keeper, who, dying when he was a boy, left him to the drudgery of bartending and floor-scrubbing. But he was ambitious of better things, and made an attempt for a liberal education by going to Oxford and supporting himself as a servitor, that is, waiting on the tables of the richer students, a business for which his hotel life had particularly qualified him. His heart, by degrees, had been drawn by the Holy Spirit toward a godly life, and falling in with the Wesleys and others of the "Holy Club," he commenced the search for God in dead earnest. The Wesleys had at this time gotten no further than their ascetic and legal strivings, and into this they led Whitefield. It is touching and pitiful to see the awful, yet fruitless earnestness of his struggles.

His nature was so much more ardent than that of the Wesleys, that he quickly went far beyond them, and brought himself into such straits that they hardly knew how to advise him any further. He fasted and prayed and wept and watched with such incessant vehemence that he brought himself near to death. He got scarcely more than three hours sleep in a night. For diet he allowed himself little more than dry crusts of bread and sage tea, and purposely wore old and dirty clothes, in order to mortify his pride. To imitate Jesus in the desert, he would go out into the college yard at night, and in the pelting storm lie for hours on the cold and wet ground, praying most piteously. The result was, as might have been expected; first, his mind failed him so that he could no longer prepare his lessons, causing him to burst into tears before his tutors at recitation, and then his health broke down and he lay helpless with fever for some seven weeks. In the course of this sickness he saw how useless it was to attempt to work out salvation by these ascetic practices, and began in a blind way to feel his utter helplessness to do anything of himself to merit salvation. Thus slowly was he taught the truth

through bitter experience. But the time of his deliverance was at hand.

One day feeling extremely thirsty, and thinking of Christ in like suffering on the cross, he was led to adopt his language, and throwing himself on his bed, cried out in an agony of soul, "I thirst, I thirst," having, however, quite as much reference to his spiritual as to his literal want. Then and there he was enabled to trust. His burden rolled off, and he began to give praise to God. Soon after this clear reception of Christ, being filled from this time forth with an excess of joy, he went home to Gloucester, and taking the Scriptures, rather than his ascetic authors, for his reading, drank in strong draughts of the living water to his thirsty soul.

Here renovated in body, mind, and spirit, he began to yearn toward the ministry of reconciliation, longing to tell to others the great joy that he himself had found. Yet he was extremely modest and conscientious, thinking himself unfit for the sacred office. But good Bishop Benson and other friends, discerning his talent and spirit, urged him forward rather than held him back, till at last he consented to be ordained, not, however, till he had compared the Thirty-nine

Articles of the Church of England with the Scriptures, and carefully examined himself according to the qualifications laid down in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus. Yet he says that when he went up to the altar for ordination, he could think of nothing but Samuel standing as a little child before the Lord with a linen ephod, and he adds, "When the bishop laid his hands on my head, my heart was melted down, and I offered up my whole spirit, soul, and body, to the service of God's sanctuary"; but in a letter to a friend at this time, he says: "I have thrown myself blindfold, and I trust without reserve, into God Almighty's hands; only I would have you observe that until you hear of me dying for or in my work, you will not be apprised of all the preferment that I expect." A week after, when he had preached his first sermon, he commenced another letter, saying in the fullness of his unfettered soul, "Glory, glory, glory be ascribed to an almighty, triune God! last Sunday I preached my first sermon"; and closed the letter by saying, "Blessed be God, I now find freedom in writing. Glorious Jesus,

> "Unloose my stammering tongue to tell
> Thy love, immense, unsearchable."

Here you see the kindlings of that mighty flame. Here you see the mighty blasts that fanned it. Some one went to Bishop Benson and said that Whitefield's first sermon had driven fifteen persons mad. "I only hope," replied the bishop, "that their madness will last till next Sunday." Here, then, was the all-engrossing, deeply rooted, hard-earned experience, and thorough, conscientious consecration that called into action his wonderful native powers. Religion was a great reality to him, and it was the only reality with him. His experience had burned through his whole nature, consuming all love of the world, and all the pride of life, and leaving only the one absorbing passion of leading men to Christ, of snatching them out of the follies of the world and the powers of sin, into the clear light of eternal blessedness. Such was the man, and such was his experience and motive.

3. And now as to the times in which he lived, or rather, as to the *power of God that was now abroad* working with him, and preparing the masses everywhere for his approach. I cannot exaggerate the importance of this point. The times made the man quite as much as the man made the times. The Spirit of the Lord was moving the hearts

of men toward religious things—not always consciously or visibly. Perhaps, on the other hand, the general irreligion of the times was growing turbulent and defiant. Such is often the case when the heart is disturbed. The ungodly are restless and passionate and hostile, because a strange power that they understand not is getting hold of them. But they are thus rendered much more impressible. Then too, the providences of God were co-working with the Spirit in such a manner as to produce the most mighty effects. Almost miracles were wrought in the work.

Let me instance a case. In Yorkshire, England, there was a devoted and evangelical rector by the name of Grimshaw, who had itinerated somewhat and had greatly stirred up the people on the general subject, and who, therefore, stood all ready to co-operate with Whitefield. Therefore, when it was announced that he and Lady Huntingdon had come into the region thousands assembled to hear the great preacher. And now look upon the scene. A platform is erected in the fields, for no church can hold the multitudes. Whitefield and Grimshaw take then their place upon it. The great crowd stretches all around, waiting in

breathless expectancy. A prayer is offered —all is still. Whitefield rises and shouts out his text. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Then he pauses, when all at once a shriek is heard; away yonder in the crowd God has emphasized the text. A person has been struck dead. And Grimshaw, who has left the stage to ascertain the cause of the commotion, cries out: "Brother Whitefield, you stand between the living and the dead. The destroying angel is passing over the congregation—'cry aloud and spare not.'" In a few minutes quiet is restored, the dead man has been carried out, and Whitefield shouts his text again. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Another shriek, and another has fallen dead. And he too is carried out, and once more the text is announced, a pause is made—but as no more fall the sermon proceeds. And how could such a man as Whitefield preach to such an audience in such circumstances, when it seemed that God himself came near to emphasize the text?

And in almost every part of the world where he traveled he could find some mighty man of God that had prepared

the way before him, some Grimshaw or Wesley or Edwards or Tennent or Prime or Parsons or Blair, for there were many spiritual giants in those days. On the other hand, the *opposition* that Satan stirred up against him helped to awaken an interest. He was preached against and written against, and ridiculed and maligned and persecuted in every way. Once in Ireland he came near being stoned to death like Stephen, and once in England he was attacked in his own bed and barely escaped with his life. All these things gave him immense notoriety and drew immense throngs, and a throng would always arouse him to a mighty sermon.

Then too he attempted such *daring* deeds. You have heard, perhaps, of his great field-day on Moorfield, on the Whitsun holiday. Moorfield was a vast playground in the suburbs of London, where in those days the most abandoned of the population, those that never entered the churches and cared nothing for religion, carried on their sports. Whitefield often preached there, as did Wesley and others of like spirit. But on this occasion he conceived the idea of holding the place all day for God on this great holiday, while the roughs claimed it as

their own. Friends dissuaded and said he would never get away alive. But he had his pulpit erected beforehand and was on it at six o'clock in the morning, gathering the crowd about him and preaching until weary. And again at twelve, at noon, and again at six in the evening, holding a large part of the assemblage with him, while the savage opposition sought to drown his voice with drums and to knock him off his pulpit and to break up his audience by rushing down upon it with columns of rowdies in close file. But he held his ground all day, and that evening at his tabernacle a thousand requests for prayer were handed in from those who had heard the word that day, and three hundred and fifty were added to his church as the result of that heroic daring. Never, perhaps, was the devil so stormed in his own quarters. It is regarded as the greatest of his field-days. Oh, shall we ever again have men that can take hold in such a way of such classes of society ?

But I must not tarry with isolated incidents. I suppose you know that his headquarters in England was the tabernacle in London, the center of the Calvinistic Methodists, and in America his orphan home in

Georgia was the one spot to which he returned and for which he traveled. The early example of Francké in building an orphan home has been followed by various kindred spirits. But it would seem that in the course of providence Whitefield's orphan home was more the means for sending him out itinerating than it was an end for the care of the destitute. True, he built an immense edifice, and collected large sums of money for its support, and for a while it did good work, but shortly after his death the building was burned and the institute broken up, so that not even this remains as a monument of his labors. He was evidently designed to be the chief itinerant of the great revival. Learned men and orators had declared Christianity to be dead and dying, and God determined to show that Christianity was still living and could fire the heart of man as nothing else could. And yet it must not be supposed that he was always on the top wave; he had his dark hours and his dull times, but he triumphed over them all.

Perhaps I cannot better close this very imperfect sketch of this most wonderful man than by telling how at last he died—it is so illustrative of his whole career. In

September, 1769, he left England on his last trip to America. He landed in Georgia and had the satisfaction of finding his orphanage in a most prosperous condition. He then started North on a preaching tour, though in feeble health. He made his usual triumphant march up through the colonies, preaching at Philadelphia and New York and intermediate stations. Then he took a tour up the Hudson and westward in the State of New York as far as the country was then settled, and seemed transported with the opening fields in the New World. Yet he was ripening fast, and was in almost one continual strain of praise, saying in one of his letters, "Hallelujah! Let chapel, tabernacle, heaven, and earth resound with hallelujahs! I can say no more, my heart is too big to say more!" The last entry in his journal was after having preached from the coffin of a criminal under the gallows, of which he says: "Solemn! Solemn! Effectual good I hope was done—grace, grace!" Thus he passed on northward, preaching every day.

His last sermon was delivered at Exeter, New Hampshire, in the open air. He was quite feeble, and some one said, "Sir, you are more fit to go to bed than to preach."

"True, sir," he replied, recognizing his feebleness. And then stepping aside and clasping his hands together and looking up he said, with all the simplicity and earnestness of a child, "Lord Jesus, I am weary *in* thy work but not *of* thy work. If I have not yet finished my course, let me go on and speak for thee once more in the fields, seal thy truth, and then go home and die." He went, and nobly did he rally his dying power for that last effort. His text was, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves." It was one of his favorite themes, grown out of his own experience, "Faith and Works." He was so near gone that his voice repeatedly flagged and grew hoarse. Then he would rouse himself and soar aloft on some flight of eloquence, and thus for two long hours he threw his failing strength into his loved employ. Conscious that he was near his end he uttered in the closing of the sermon these thrilling words:

"I go to my everlasting rest. My sun has risen, shone, and is setting—nay, is about to rise and shine forever. I have not lived in vain, and though I could live to preach Christ a thousand years, I die to be with him, which is far better."

When the sermon was over he rode to Newburyport, to the house of Mr. Parsons, pastor of the Presbyterian church, at which he was announced to preach on the morrow, which was the Sabbath.

While he was at the tea table a crowd gathered around the door and in the hall, wishing to hear some words from him. But he was so utterly exhausted that he turned to a minister present and said: "Brother, you must speak to the people, I cannot say a word," and taking his candle he started for his chamber. But as he passed through the hall the sight of the eager people touched his noble soul, and he halted on the stairs and began to exhort them. His heart was full, and he talked on and on till the candle in his hand burned down and went out, and then he retired to his bed. In the middle of the night his asthma came on very badly. He sat up in bed and prayed for all his dear ones, particularly for his orphanage in Georgia and his tabernacle in London. But soon he choked for breath, and flying to the window he threw it up and said, "I am dying, I am dying," and at six o'clock in the morning, just as the Sabbath sun was rising on the world, his happy spirit took its flight.

According to his own desire he was laid

to rest beneath the pulpit of the Federal Street Presbyterian Church in Newburyport, where his dust still remains. Funeral services were held all over Protestant Christendom, and every true minister of Christ could say, as did the one who offered the prayer at the funeral, "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof." But, as another has said, he took his mantle with him. There has been no one like him, and perhaps never will be. Spurgeon has been called the modern Whitefield. But Spurgeon is about as much like Whitefield as the patient ox is like the charging war horse. He stands alone, "the prince of pulpit orators," the cosmopolitan evangelist, the concrete exponent of the Great Awakening of the eighteenth century.

VI

James Davenport, and the Disorders

HUS far, in these lectures, I have surveyed the field and the work, and made special mention of the principal leaders—Wesley, Edwards, Tennent, and Whitefield. Of them, and of

their work, and of the movement as a whole, I have generally spoken in terms of unqualified approbation. But I should be an unfair historian if I did not allude to phases of the movement that were not what they should have been, and which so far colored the whole work as to bring down upon it, in many quarters, strong disapprobation. In fact, I do not know but that in 1745 or 1750 a third or perhaps half the ministers of America would have voted the great revival a curse rather than a blessing, a delusion of the devil and a disturber of the peace.

This, perhaps, is not to be wondered at, when we remember that so many of the clergy were unspiritual men. But still, it must be confessed that many who were, in the judgment of charity, sound Christians, were, on the whole, more opponents than friends of the revival. I have shown how Edwards was dismissed from Northampton, and how Tennent and the Presbytery of New Brunswick were excluded from the Synod of Philadelphia, and you all know how utterly impossible Wesley found it to stay within the Church of England; and I might have told you how the faculties of Harvard and of Yale issued their protests against Whitefield, and how

the General Association of Massachusetts placed upon its records a condemnation of the abuses of the times without any recognition of the great blessing that had fallen upon the churches within the same period. In fact, for a little it seemed that the Great Awakening would be chronicled in history as nothing but a great, unprofitable frenzy. Strong and sharp was the battle of opinion for a considerable space.

But now that the smoke and the heat of the conflict is past, it remains for us of later times to view the whole with a dispassionate eye and discern the main elements of truth in the case. I have repeatedly reminded you, in the course of these lectures, of the fact that Satan uses all manner of methods in the promulgation of his kingdom. Whatever he cannot prevent, that he seeks to control. When, therefore, he found that he could not prevent the Great Awakening, he sought to push it into the wildest fanaticism and folly. Just the exact point, however, where he, in such cases, steps in and gains control, it is very difficult to determine. The Scripture tells us that Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. In the wonder and amazement of the vision it is not easy to discern

the exact point where the counterfeit takes the place of the real. None but the most practiced eye can, at first sight, discern counterfeit money; and the case is not much different with religion. So, doubtless, much that is considered genuine is really counterfeit, and much that is considered counterfeit is really genuine. Time, however, sets all in clearest light.

Man is a complex creature. He has a body, a mind, and a spirit, and when each of these is fallen and diseased, it is no easy thing to keep them in proper equilibrium. If the first, the body, is unduly stimulated, the man becomes sensual; if the second, he becomes rationalistic; if the third, he becomes fanatical. Satan always watches the predisposition of the individual, or the drift of the times, to push men into one or the other of these errors. The Great Awakening—the great stimulating of the spiritual part of humanity—was Satan's grand opportunity to make fanatics. He tried the leaders, but with indifferent success. Wesley's good sense gave the enemy only a temporary and trifling advantage; Edwards' strong intellectuality saved him; Tennent discovered his own undue vehemence in time to prevent its proceeding to

disastrous length; Whitefield, though sometimes betrayed into injudicious remarks, was wonderfully controlled, as it would seem, by divine watchcare.

But with some of the lesser lights the enemy was more successful; and it is of one of these, James Davenport, that I am to speak somewhat briefly in this lecture as illustrating the disorders of the times. And I, personally, have had the more interest in the matter because some of his wildest extravagances were enacted in the place of my boyhood, and one of the most serious of the separations which he caused was from the stanch old church which I used to attend at New London, Connecticut.

James Davenport was a descendant of the famous John Davenport, the first minister of New Haven, and was, therefore, intimately connected with some of the first families of that city. He was graduated at Yale in 1732, and settled at Southhold, Long Island. He had, therefore, been some seven or eight years a pastor when the revival wave came to its height. He entered largely and successfully into it both at home and abroad, and was esteemed a man of great sanctity and effectiveness. Whitefield regarded him as one of the most zealous and

godly men that he met with in his travels, and spoke of him in the highest terms in his journal. He was also a great friend of Tennent, whom he was accustomed to visit in New Jersey, and by others he was esteemed almost an apostle.

He was, however, an unbalanced man, and was not altogether sound in health, which seems to have had an influence on his mind. About 1740 he received the impression that he was to be the Lord's prophet, with extraordinary gifts and powers. He called some of his people together at his own house and exhorted them in an excited strain for twenty-four hours together. Having, as he thought, the power of discerning spirits, he made distinctions as to who was converted and who was not, and forbade the latter to come to the communion. He attempted furthermore to work a miracle of healing on a dumb, insane woman, and claimed that he succeeded, as the patient *died* on the day on which he had predicted that she would recover. This release from pain he regarded as an answer to his prayer.

His people, as a whole, could not endure him, but one of his members especially believed in him, and proposed that they two

should go abroad among the churches with their extraordinary powers. Just then Davenport read in his Bible of Jonathan and his armor-bearer going to smite the garrison of the Philistines, and he applied the passage to himself and his devoted assistant. But Jonathan did not go against the Philistines till they challenged him to come, and so Davenport could not go to any outside places till some one challenged or invited him to come. Soon, however, the people at East Hampton, on the other side of the island, said they would like to have Mr. Davenport visit them. This was, to his mind, the "challenge" he had been waiting for, and so he and his "armor-bearer" waded knee deep in snow over to East Hampton, just as, according to their vivid imagination, Jonathan and his armor-bearer climbed on their hands and knees up to the garrison of the Philistines. Here at East Hampton it would seem that Davenport did a good work, having many conversions, which confirmed him in the idea of his mission.

Accordingly, the next year he set out on an extensive tour through Connecticut. He landed at Stonington, and so great was his power as a preacher that a hundred

persons were struck under conviction by the first sermon, and many conversions occurred which the lapse of years proved to be true and genuine. From Stonington he traveled leisurely westward, visiting all the churches and producing great excitement. His method was, as he entered a town, to first visit the minister and "discern" whether he was converted or not—that is, whether he would yield to him and indorse him in all his ways and give him free use of his church. If he "discerned" him unconverted, and if the minister would not yield to him as a prophet of the Lord, he would pour forth the most violent denunciation against him as a blind guide, as a wolf in sheep's clothing, and then pray for, or rather against the "unworthy hireling," and call upon what people he could influence to separate from the ungodly church and to follow him "without the camp, bearing the reproach of Jesus."

By this method of procedure many societies of "Separatists," as they were called, were organized in eastern Connecticut. At New London, as I have already intimated, Mr. Davenport exerted great influence, drawing off a hundred members from the old church on the hill and organizing a

new society in the lower part of the town, which was to serve not only as a church, but also as a theological seminary, where true ministers were to be educated and sent forth. This institution was called the "Shepherd's Tent." From New London he passed on, visiting all the towns till he came to New Haven, where his high family connection and former associations in Yale College procured him a most favorable reception. The minister gave him free use of his pulpit and all went on well for a time. But Davenport soon pronounced the minister "unconverted" and withdrew, organizing a new society, which still exists as one of the Congregational churches of that city. It was at this time, and partly through Mr. Davenport's influence, that David Brainerd, then a student at Yale, made the unadvised remark about the piety of one of the tutors that procured his expulsion from the college.

From New Haven Davenport journeyed on in his accustomed manner to Stratford, where he was arrested as a disturber of the peace and carried to Hartford for trial before the General Assembly. He was convicted as a disorderly person, but being considered only an enthusiast and partially

insane, his sentence was simply transportation out of Connecticut back to his home in Long Island. This was executed with all due promptness and kindness. But Davenport could view the matter in no other light than as persecution for righteousness' sake. Therefore he soon started out again on a more extended tour through New England, landing this time near Boston. The clergy of Boston were so much alarmed by his coming that they immediately held a meeting for consultation as to what attitude they should take in reference to him. Their deliberations were published, and were to the effect that though they regarded Mr. Davenport as a true minister of Christ, by whom great good had been wrought, yet such were his disorders and extravagances that they could not admit him to their pulpits. He, of course, took to the Common and preached in his usual excited way and organized a separate society, which, however, never had much vitality.

Yet while he remained he was so much of a power and a plague that he was indicted before the grand jury. One of the witnesses gave this testimony, which shows us the temper of the man. He had heard Mr. Davenport make use of these words,

apparently in prayer: "Good Lord, I will not mince the matter any longer with thee; thou knowest that I know that most of the ministers of Boston and of the country are unconverted and are leading their people blindfold to hell." The result of the trial was that he was declared to be insane and not, therefore, accountable for his words and acts.

Before long, however, Mr. Davenport, much to the relief of the Boston ministers, felt moved to pass on to eastern Connecticut, where he had the most zealous following. He arrived at New London in the spring of 1743 and proceeded to inspect his work at the "Shepherd's Tent." He was now worked up to a great frenzy, and affairs, even in this stronghold of his, did not suit him. There was too much pride and false doctrine even in the "Shepherd's Tent," and hence he must purify it. Therefore he ordered all his followers there to bring together at his rooms "all their idols" that they might be burned. By their idols he meant all their more showy articles of wearing apparel, such as bonnets, cloaks, breeches, jewelry, necklaces, etc. To these he added all the books by those authors that he did not approve,

among which were those of Beveridge, Flavel, Mather, etc. It seems that he himself fell sick so that he could not in person carry out the programme and that his followers relented at burning such good clothes. But the books they did burn in the public street one Sunday afternoon with much ado, standing around the pile singing "Hallelujah" and "Glory to God," and declaring, as the smoke went up, that so the smoke of hell went up from the burning where the authors of these books were or would be consigned.

This outbreak of wild folly seems to have been the means of opening the eyes of Mr. Davenport and many of his followers. The ridiculousness and impossibility of burning all "idols" was seen, one man saying that his wife was his idol and he was not ready to burn her. The fire of the burning books seems to have burned out their inordinate zeal, and from that day Mr. Davenport himself became a wiser and more sober man. In about a year he seemed to be fully restored to good sense, and then he published to the world a most humble confession of his errors, begging the pardon of Almighty God and of his brethren in the ministry, whom he had so deeply wronged.

Though he personally thus recanted, and though the society of Separatists at New London came to naught, yet in many places his errors were taken up and carried on to most fearful lengths by the excitable, extravagant, and unsafe people who had embraced them. Supposing themselves to be under the immediate direction of the Spirit of the Lord, they could, of course, override not only all rules of church order, but even of decency and morality, so that in some places even licentiousness was practised under the sanction of saintliness and immediate inspiration. The reports of these horrid disorders would, of course, travel much farther and faster than those of the real, genuine work of the revival, and by some these things were claimed as the proper results of the revival. What wonder, then, that many staid people said, "If such things as these come from the revival, we want nothing to do with it." Hence the movement as a whole came into great disrepute with many, and even the grand leaders in it were looked upon with considerable suspicion. Whitefield had spoken in the highest terms in his published journal of Davenport, and therefore he was by many supposed to indorse

Davenport's proceedings; and thus it was with Edwards and Tennent.

Great confusion existed in the public mind in regard to the whole matter. One man was extolling and thanking God for that which another man regarded as the greatest possible calamity. Moreover, in the work itself it was quite difficult to separate the chaff from the wheat, and men seemed to forget that chaff is necessary to the production of wheat. Under the preaching of Whitefield and Edwards and others there was at times great outward confusion, men and women falling down and crying out and creating a sort of disturbance that seemed to be in the same line with Davenport's wild meetings, and in many quarters every one who proclaimed himself a revival man was supposed to be in favor of disorder and confusion.

Although time has corrected many of these wrong impressions and inferences, yet there ever has been, and is to this day, in this country a class of minds that revolts from a revival when it rises to any degree of intensity. There are very many who seem to fear religious excitement above all things else. But bad as religious excitement and confusion may be, one thing is

much worse, and that is a cold, dead indifference to eternal things—an absence of those impressions, revelations and inspirations from God that bring everlasting destiny before us. What matters it if a few are overcome as to their bodies, or as to their brains even, if the great mass of the people can be awakened to eternal truth?

Moses and Daniel and John and Paul and others of the writers of the Bible were overcome by the visions which they saw; but what matters that, in comparison with the value of the Bible which through them was given to the world? And many are the times when the uninitiated pronounce men mad who are, in fact, more sane than their critics. Festus cried out to the noble apostle, "Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad," but the apostle replied, "I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness." On the day of Pentecost some cried out, "These men are full of new wine," but Peter replied, "These are not drunken, but this is that which the prophet promised."

The evils of religious excitement are nothing in comparison with the evils of religious insensibility.

Even the excesses of such a man as Davenport were of short duration, and there was much of permanent value in his work. A considerable number of the Baptist churches of eastern Connecticut are the final shape which these Separatist organizations of the Great Awakening finally took. And I am not sure but that I, as an individual, owe something to the labors of Davenport. There were, in the days of my boyhood in that region about New London, the two types of piety which those former centuries engendered—one, the cold intellectual, that would chill a fervent soul, and the other the fervid demonstrative, that needs intelligent foundation. Neither is my model, but I owe something to the latter as well as to the former.

All parts of our nature need to be touched by the Holy Ghost.

But there is one special lesson to be learned from the career of Davenport, and that is as to the necessity of having a sound and sanctified body, as well as mind and spirit. Fanaticism and insanity come quite as much from an imperfect body as they do from what we call an unbalanced mind. Only when we attain the glorified body shall we be fully free from the pos-

sibility of fanaticism. But even now we may claim that help of the Spirit that shall restore and balance the several parts of our triune personality, so that our whole spirit, soul, and body may be preserved blameless in the day of the Lord Jesus. And let us see well to it that the enemy does not gain ascendancy over us as to either part of our nature, and may we ever have wisdom in times of great religious interest to discern between true and false enthusiasm in the Lord's work.

VII

Results and Lessons of the Great Awakening

AVING now given a brief outline of the facts of the Great Awakening of 1740, it remains for me to sum up the results and to state the more important lessons taught by this wonderful historical movement. The chief value of a revival of religion is seen in its permanent results, that live on long after the first excitement has passed away. God has promised that his Spirit "shall come down like rain upon the mown grass." Now the value of the

rain is not merely in the freshness which it sheds abroad while it is falling, but in the springing growth and maturity of the vegetation that results therefrom. Bearing this in mind, let us see:

I. *What were the results of the Great Awakening?* 1. The first thing that we naturally think of is *the number of converts.* As I stated in one of the preceding lectures, fifty thousand is a very moderate estimate for those in America; and there surely must have been an equal number in Great Britain. Much, of course, depends on the length of the period we include; but it is quite difficult to say exactly when we may consider that the Great Awakening ceased. It has in fact never ceased. The church has never since that time fallen into quite such a spiritual slumber as preceded it. Yet there have been since then times when spiritual life waned, and when the popular mind has been chiefly absorbed in other than religious themes. The time from 1775 to 1815 was such a period—a time of great political excitement, embracing the American Revolution, the French Revolution, and the Napoleonic wars. These things kept the attention of men largely centered on worldly things. Yet about the

year 1800 there was a powerful revival in the Middle States, and shortly after this the great missionary enterprises of the church produced an enkindling fervor in the public mind. But taking all things into account, I think we may as well fix on 1770, the year of Whitefield's death, as the terminus of the Great Awakening. At that time the membership of the Wesleyan Methodist societies in Great Britain was thirty thousand, and to these we may, without doubt, add twenty thousand to be found among the Calvinistic Methodists, the Independents, and the Church of England. So that I think we may safely say that a hundred thousand souls were converted in Great Britain and America during the period of the Great Awakening. And these conversions, you must remember, were for the most part somewhat of the Pauline stamp—vivid, thorough, deep—not mere easy and natural acknowledgments of the claims of Christ such as we have now-a-days, but agonizing experiences that made wonderful impressions upon their subjects. These were conversions that were seen and felt and known, in many cases reclaiming men from a life of hardened vice or strong infidelity and opposition to God. A hundred

thousand so converted, at a time when the world had almost forgotten what conversion was, or doubted the power of religion to create any such change in the human heart —I say, a hundred thousand such conversions at such a time was simply tremendous, a sublime spectacle before the world.

2. So I mention as a second result *the change of opinion that came over the world with regard to Christianity as a power.* Spiritual religion had been supposed by skeptics to be an effete superstition. But lo! it arises in might, sways the masses, claims its thousands, counts its martyrs, and walks forth as the great power of the times. Men began to see a meaning in the words of the old Book, when it said, "Awake! awake! put on thy strength, O Zion." They might still be unbelievers as to the claims of the source of the power, but they could no longer ignore the fact of the power. And although the blind madness of infidelity in France, where the power of the revival was not seen, marched on to its frantic and fanatical work of exterminating the name of Christianity from that portion of the earth, yet the truly great minds of the time saw plainly enough that Christianity was a power, and that it

could neither be crushed nor ignored. The deep-thinking Napoleon restored Christianity, nominally, as the religion of the empire, because he saw that it was a power in the earth. And all common-sense men feel and believe that to be a fact to this day. Some special pleaders and narrowly wise men in some particular branch of thought may conceive that there is really no power in Christianity aside from men's own fancies. But whoever reads history, or at least whoever keeps in sympathy with these old days we have been considering, knows and feels in his inmost soul that there is strength in Zion.

3. Another result of the Great Awakening was *the change of sentiment which was wrought within the church herself as to the real nature of true religion.* For, as I have shown you, many in her ranks and in her ministry, educated in her forms and doctrines, but never having felt the power, had begun to consider Christianity merely a form and a faith. To learn the catechism and to submit to the ordinances many thought was to be a Christian. To have the form merely, without the power, was the height of many an honest ambition. Yea, many did not know that there was

any power. Like certain disciples of old, they had not so much as heard whether there was any Holy Ghost. But when he came like a rushing mighty wind, bending the tall cedar of the mountain as well as the tender grass of the valley, old professors opened their eyes and said: "Alas, alas, we have never known the power of God before! This is that which is written in the Book, but we never understood it before. It is not enough to profess to know Christ. We must be in living communication with him." The fact and necessity of the new birth dawned like a new truth on many a heart that had ecclesiastically and formally supposed itself to be Christian. It was one of the converts of the Great Awakening who wrote that vivid and graphic hymn:

> Awaked by Sinai's awful sound,
> My soul in bonds of guilt I found,
> And knew not where to go;
> One solemn truth increased my pain,
> "The sinner must be born again,"
> Or sink to endless woe.

Many of the clergy confessed that now, for the first time, had they themselves known the real essence of religion. The tone of preaching changed and the aim and

endeavor of the ministry changed. And from that day to this a change of heart, a real experience, has been insisted on in most of the Protestant denominations.

4. This brings me to speak, in the fourth place, of *the change that was wrought in church organization, or church practice, rather.* The Congregational and Presbyterian denominations were practically reorganized on the Baptist principle of converted church-membership. Stoddardism, or the Half-way Covenant, received for a time at least its deathblow. The theory that there was no objection to an unconverted ministry was overthrown. The Methodist denomination, the vital power in which has been experimental godliness, sprang into existence and has taken the forefront of all denominations in point of numbers. The Baptists also received a mighty impulse and increase, and from that day to this have been recognized as a power in the religious world.

In fact, the Great Awakening secured a grand triumph of Baptist principles, or, at least, Baptist practices. The corner-stone of the Baptist faith is a professedly converted church-membership. Before the Great Awakening none except Baptists

acknowledged this principle. Since the Great Awakening none have dared to ignore it. Methodists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists are in large degree Baptist in their practice. And although the old creeds stand with their erroneous ideas, formed and acted upon before the Great Awakening, the practice of the churches since that time has been chiefly in favor of experimental religion. No one can intelligently perceive the value of Baptist doctrine without understanding this historical period. The dark days that preceded the Great Awakening will come again unless somebody stands firmly and clearly and decidedly by the doctrine of a converted church-membership.

5. But I pass on to note another result of the Great Awakening, namely, *the great impulse given to evangelical education and intelligence*. Education without regeneration has, in past ages, produced a vast amount of formalism and death in religion. Consequently, some short-sighted zealots have regarded it as an enemy rather than as a friend of true piety. Hence, some enthusiasts have gloried in their ignorance of book learning and vaunted themselves on the inspiration of the Spirit alone. But

the Great Awakening was conducted chiefly by men of education, and it has left its decided record and invaluable monuments in the way of institutions of learning and religious literature. I have shown how the College of New Jersey and the Theological Seminary at Princeton grew out of Tennent's Log College at Neshaminy, and how those notable institutions were conducted for a time almost wholly in the interest of the great revival, thus starting the educational system of the Presbyterian church. Harvard and Yale received a great impulse from the revival, though they at first set themselves against it. Dartmouth College, in New Hampshire, was a direct outgrowth of the Great Awakening, funds for its establishment being solicited in England by Occom, the converted Mohegan Indian, who wrote the hymn I have already quoted, "Awaked by Sinai's awful sound." Lord Dartmouth, a zealous Methodist, gave so largely to its funds that the institution was named after him. Brown University, at Providence, the parent of all the Baptist colleges, was founded during the Great Awakening. Lady Huntingdon also planted an institution in her own lifetime for the education of her preachers, and

the regular Methodists followed in due time with theirs. So, very many of the colleges and seminaries of the present day largely owe their existence, or their influence as healthful fountains of truth, directly to the Great Awakening.

Some people have claimed the Sunday-school as an outgrowth of this same period; so doubtless it was in some sense, though it more properly belongs to a season a little later. Yet it is a fact worthy of record that the first Sunday-school in Great Britain was planted at Gloucester where Whitefield was born, and the first Sunday-school in America was at Newburyport, Mass., where Whitefield died and was buried.

It is, I believe, generally conceded that the first religious newspaper ever published was the "Christian History," printed in Boston for the express purpose of reporting the progress of the revival, and so we may consider this the parent of the innumerable progeny of religious periodicals that now throng our pathway.

6. But one of the grandest, most appropriate, and sweetest results, or monuments of the Great Awakening, was *its invaluable contribution to Christian song*. God has promised that whenever his Spirit is poured

out there will be grand outbursts of song. As the prophet says: "Even the mountains and the hills shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands." In all ages the people of God have sung when conscious of great deliverances or blessings: Miriam on the bank of the Red Sea; David when the people were firmly established in the land; the angels when the Saviour was born, with whom Zacharias and Mary chimed in; the early Christians in their feasts of love; Gregory with his stately chants upon the establishment of the church; Adolphus and Luther in the battles and successes of the Reformation. But I doubt if such a wealth and variety of Christian song was ever poured forth in so short a time as during the years of the Great Awakening. What a blessed list of singers! The Wesleys—Charles, a chief of the whole company, aided by his father and his brothers; Addison, of literary fame; the graceful Montgomery, a poet indeed; Doctor Watts, known the world over; and Doddridge and Toplady and Olivers, and Anne Steele and Lady Huntingdon, and Robinson and Fawcett, and Occom, Hervey, and Hart—all of whom have sent their productions down

to our day, besides so very many, true and glowing in their time, that have been somewhat crowded aside by the rush of other aspirants.

A hundred years make many changes, push aside very much as obsolete in thought or in expression. Many sweet singers have since arisen, and the records of medieval and ancient song have recently been explored and put in new dress before the world. Yet on looking hastily over the index of our ordinary church hymn book, I count three hundred and sixty-eight hymns as the product of the Great Awakening, and doubtless a better knowledge of authors would reveal more than that number. And how fervent and solid and sweet many of them are! Listen to some of the first lines and see if you ever heard them before:

1. Rock of Ages cleft for me, by Toplady. 2. Jesus, lover of my soul, by C. Wesley. 3. Come, thou fount of every blessing, by Robinson. 4. Am I a solder of the cross, by Watts. 5. Blest be the tie that binds, by Fawcett. 6. Awaked by Sinai's awful sound, by Occom. 7. Come, ye sinners, poor and wretched, by Hart. 8. When thou, my righteous Judge, shalt come, by Lady Huntingdon. 9. Jesus, I love thy charming name, by Doddridge. 10. Oh, where shall rest be found, by Montgomery. 11. Dear Refuge of my weary soul, by Anne Steele.

And so if I were to give more than one from each author, I could report scores of our most familiar hymns as the results of the outburst of Christian song more than a hundred years ago. This is a kind of testimony that cannot be gainsaid. That was no mean or unworthy period of the church which begat all these blessed hymns.

7. And last, I must once more name that which I have several times mentioned in the course of the lectures: *The influence of the revival on social and political history.* It is difficult, I know, to say just how much of the prosperity of Great Britain and America is due to these religious influences. But who can compare fairly the history of France and England, and not be impressed with the fact that some mighty power has preserved the latter from those social and political volcanoes with which the former is repeatedly upheaved. We are continually saying, "poor France," "poor Spain," "poor Italy." Why poor? Have they not a sunnier climate, more venerable associations and treasures? Why, then, poor? Poor, because the revival waves of true spiritual religion have not passed over them. Because they know only the religion of form that does not, and never can,

satisfy the heart. "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."

Thus, to review, we see that almost all things that we prize as dearest and best in our lives, are in some sense the results of the Great Awakening. Our churches, our doctrines, our customs, our literature, our colleges, our songs, yea, the whole current of our political history, all have been different because of the Great Awakening, to say nothing of the myriad souls gathered safe home to heaven through its influence.

II. *The Lessons of the Great Awakening.* And now as to the lessons. They are many. Only a few of them can I mention here.

1. The first that I mention is that *history is a grand witness to the truth of the Bible, and the reality of religion.* Sometimes people get bewildered among the mists of the speculatively inclined, as for example, the evolutionists. They follow some plausible theory till it seems to sap the foundations of the Bible, and they become disturbed in their faith. But turn a moment and look at these grand facts of history; see these trophies of grace. Take a glance at Northampton or Moorfield, where the power of the Lord rolled down

as a mighty torrent, sweeping all before it, and you can doubt no longer. These things were not done in a corner, they are grand, open-air, noonday, modern-time facts, worth ten thousand tons of finely spun theory. The old Bible is true and all men will find it so.

2. Another lesson which we should keep in mind is that *Christianity, when rightly believed in and heartily worked, is a power.* The power resides not in the truth alone, nor in the Spirit alone, but in the truth and the Spirit working together. The truth alone educates, and the Spirit alone stimulates ; but the truth and the Spirit working together conquer the head and the heart, and bring all into captivity to the mind of Christ. And the man who believes the truth and is accompanied by the Spirit, is the true preacher with power. Let us never forget the power of Christianity. It seemed like madness for Whitefield to attack Moorfield on the Whitsun holiday ; but what a grand demonstration of power it was ! And any one who will go forth in the power of the Lord, may in like manner win victories. We should be less occupied with theories and more immersed in practice. Instead of having so many apologies for Christianity,

we should say with Paul, I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." We should use it too with boldness. It will cut sometimes where we least expect it.

3. Another lesson that we learn is that *the hope of the church is in revivals of religion.* But, says one, we ought to be steadily alive in the cause of God, and not to have these periodic excitements. So too, all men ought to be Christians; so too, the earth ought to be a heaven. But unhappily, none of these things are as yet. All things here at present are out of joint. A fierce battle rages. The enemy gains an advantage, comes in like a flood, but then the Spirit of the Lord lifts up a standard against him, drives him back and gains the ground. Thus it ever has been, and thus no doubt it will be till the Lord shall come to reign. So, then, I say, revivals of religion are the hope of our times. And those churches that believe in them and work for them are the churches that will live and grow, while those that trust to their creed, or their dignity, or their culture, or their standing, or their talent, will lose their spiritual power and become mere human and earthly institutions.

4. But again, we should learn that *true revivals come down from above in answer to prayer*. They are not man-made excitements. No one can impartially read the history of the Great Awakening without seeing that the moving power was not in man, but in God. There was no concert between Wesley and Edwards and Tennent and Whitefield to stir up the world. But God sent them every one, and through them and others like them moved the multitudes.

5. Another thing that we learn is that *powerful revivals will awaken a great amount of opposition*, and very likely *some will run into unprofitable excitement and extremes*, but that the chaff will soon blow away leaving the precious grain. The good results of the Great Awakening remained long after the follies of the time had passed. Moreover, we of this day with our preponderance of head-culture, need not fear a too fervid state of the heart. The danger of our time is not from excitement, but from cold indifferentism. No church can indeed live on excitement, but any church with a stable and able ministry need not fear too much excitement. The mill never gets too hot when there is grain in the hopper.

6. And lastly, let us learn from a review of this period *how easily and unconsciously men intending to do right may be allured into an unsafe slumber*. Scores of ministers and church officials and church-members were, before this mighty arousement, sleeping in a state of spiritual deadness that was fatal to any true Christian life. We would not judge them, but they themselves confessed that they were without hope and without God in the world, living a mere formal life, and having no real communion with God. Yet they supposed themselves to be model Christians, and were greatly disturbed when zealous men, moved by the Spirit, began to hold up the requirements of God instead of the old customs and standards of fossilized churches.

Nor should we of to-day forget that during the last thirty-five or forty years revivals have greatly declined in power, that is, in the depth of the experience which they engender. Moreover, the best religious life of modern days does not at all compare with that of the apostolic day. So without doubt the churches of our day will need some great awakening in order to prepare those who will be ready for the coming of the Lord.

But let us ever remember that while the Lord's power is sufficient for any emergency, he has a right to expect from his people, enlightened as they may be by the word and the lessons of history, an intelligent co-operation in the workings of his Holy Spirit.

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